

# Giant Whitefly



**Giant whiteflies can cover a beautiful plant with white fuzzy wax and sticky honeydew, turning it into an unsightly mess.**

First discovered in San Diego County in October 1992, this whitefly has spread northward into other areas of California. Since its introduction into San Diego, giant whitefly has spread rapidly northward along the coast. Although affected plants may be weakened, they rarely die. To manage giant whitefly, wash plants off with water and encourage natural enemies.

## What plants are affected?

- ◆ Many ornamentals including hibiscus, giant bird of paradise, begonia, Xylosma.
- ◆ Fruit trees including citrus, avocado, mulberry and banana.

## Look for these damage symptoms on affected plants:

- ◆ Long, white, waxy filaments produced by the whitefly give the leaf surface a bearded appearance. These hairlike strands may be mistaken for a fungal infection.
- ◆ Large amounts of sticky honeydew excreted by the whitefly as it feeds on plant sap.
- ◆ Black sooty mold growing on the honeydew.

## How to recognize the whitefly:

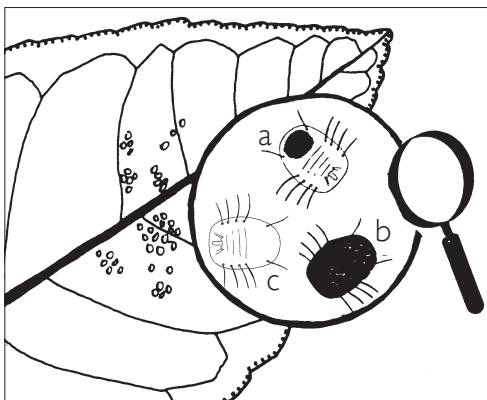
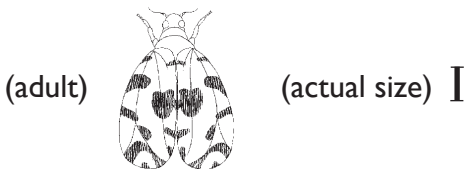
- ◆ Adults are small (3/16") and white with light brown markings on wings and usually found in groups on undersides of leaves.
- ◆ Nymphs are yellowish, small, oval, have no legs and don't move.

## To reduce problems, use an integrated program that includes:

- ◆ Removing infested leaves.
- ◆ Washing giant whiteflies off leaves with a strong stream of water.
- ◆ Planting species less susceptible to giant whitefly.
- ◆ Avoiding insecticides that injure natural enemies, such as lacewings, lady beetles, syrphid flies, and parasitic wasps.

## What about insecticides?

- ◆ Don't use insecticides if beneficial insects, including parasites and predators, are present in the area.
- ◆ To confirm the presence of parasitic wasps, use a magnifying glass to look for parasite exit holes on giant whitefly nymphs or darkened nymphs as indicated in drawings below.
- ◆ If you do choose to use an insecticide, select least toxic products such as insecticidal soaps or oils. Remember to follow label directions and spray the undersides of the leaves where whitefly colonies are found.



Examine whitefly colonies for grayish-black or yellow nymphs with exit holes (a), or darkened nymphs (b), or healthy nymphs (c).

**Use NON-CHEMICAL methods & LEAST TOXIC pesticides. WHY? Runoff from around your home and garden carries water containing pesticides that pollute our streams, rivers, lakes, and oceans.**

Learn more about San Diego regional water quality at [www.ThinkBlueSD.org](http://www.ThinkBlueSD.org) & [www.ProjectCleanWater.org](http://www.ProjectCleanWater.org).

For more pest information, visit the University of California IPM Web site at [www.ipm.ucdavis.edu](http://www.ipm.ucdavis.edu) or contact the UCCE Master Gardeners at (858) 694-2860, Mon-Fri, 9 am to 3 pm.



***It's the water that connects us!***