

Neem seed extracts to control black citrus aphid

Recognize the problem

Citrus aphids are tiny 1 to 3mm, brown to black soft roundish insects. Some may be winged, but most are wingless. They suck juice from new shoots and leaves. High numbers are normally found on new shoots and leaves. This leads to curling and distortion in leaves. They also damage flower buds and they produce a fluid called honeydew that sticks to the leaves and gets a coating of black sooty mould.

Background

The neem tree is a medium to large deep rooted tree; a bit similar than the mango tree. It has compound leaves. In Zambia, Siavonga has many neem trees. Neem extracts can control aphids. This is because the neem tree contains substances that can kill some disease causing agents and also insects. Neem seeds can be collected from February to May from neem trees in orchards and residential areas. Good control of aphids is achieved by timely application of Neem extracts. Application should be done when 3 to 5 out of 10 leaves have many aphids.

Management

- Collect neem seeds from February to May
- Grind dried Neem seed kernels in a mill or pound or in a mortar with a pestle.
- Sieve the pounded neem seeds with a wooden sieve (Sefa).
- Mix 500g powdered neem seed with 10 litres of water in a 16 Litre knapsack sprayer.
- Stir long because neem powder does not dissolve easily.
- Leave the mixture to stand for at least 5 hours in a shady area before spraying.
- Spray the neem water directly onto the aphid using a sprayer or straw brush.
- Neem water can be stored in a safe place non-reachable to children, and will remain effective for only 3 to 6 days if it is kept in the dark.
- You may repeat the spray twice in weekly intervals if aphid populations increase further
- Do not spray 14 days or less before harvest.

Citrus aphids. (Photo by CABI)



Neem tree with seeds. (Photo by K.M. Siddiqui)



Scientific name(s) > *Toxoptera citricida*

The recommendations in this factsheet are relevant to: Zambia



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