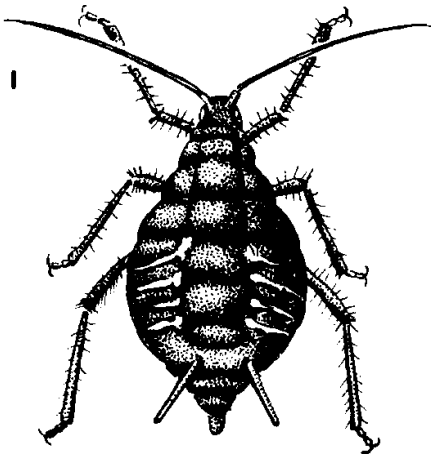
BEAN APHID **Homoptera: Aphididae** *Aphis fabae*

DESCRIPTION

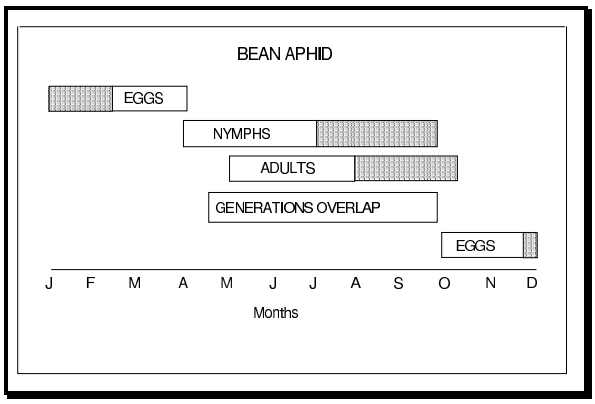
Wingless (apterae) **adults and nymphs** are about 2 mm long, dark olive-green to sooty-black with black cornicles and brown legs. **Winged adults** (alatae) are black with pale green areas on the meso- and metathorax. Nymphs resemble adults except they are smaller.



(after Farbenfabriken Bayer AG Compendium)

ECONOMIC IMPORTANCE

Large numbers of bean aphids cause serious damage by feeding on plant juices which causes poor growth and reduces yield. Feeding discolors foliage, curls leaves, and damages developing buds. Leaves may become covered with honeydew excreted by the aphids. Bean aphids form large colonies on the underside of leaves and are usually found in small localized areas in the field rather than widespread throughout the field. This pest is most common on beans, beets, spinach, cucumber, corn, and sugarbeets.



DISTRIBUTION AND LIFE HISTORY

The bean aphid is common throughout the western United States and in British Columbia. This species overwinters either as eggs or adults on dock or euonymus. In the spring, aphids begin developing and mature females give birth to living young (also females). Several generations may be produced on weedy hosts before winged females are formed which migrate to cultivated crops or weed hosts such as lambsquarters, pigweed, or shepard's purse. Several overlappling generations are produced during the summer. In the fall, winged aphids migrate back to dock or other weeds to overwinter.

MANAGEMENT AND CONTROL

Several predators and parasites feed on bean aphid and may effectively suppress the population. In some instances, however the aphid population increases rapidly and causes damage in spite of the natural enemies. Early detection of bean aphids on weeds adjoining cultivated crops may be useful to determine potential summer populations. Destroying weeds which serve as overwintering hosts is usually ineffective because infestations originate from migrant aphids from other distant areas. If necessary, insecticides may be used to control this pest.