

yellow sugarcane aphid



Yellow Sugarcane Aphid, *Sipha flava* A Pest of Sugarcane in Louisiana

Yellow sugarcane aphid biology

The yellow sugarcane aphid (YSA), *Sipha flava* (Hemiptera:Aphididae), is native to North and South America, where it feeds on many species of grasses. YSAs reproduce parthenogenetically during the warm

months, with sexual forms appearing in the winter. Nymphs, adults and winged alates often occur at the same time (Fig. 1). YSAs feed by sucking fluids from plant tissues, and they inject saliva containing toxins, which causes chlorosis of leaves.

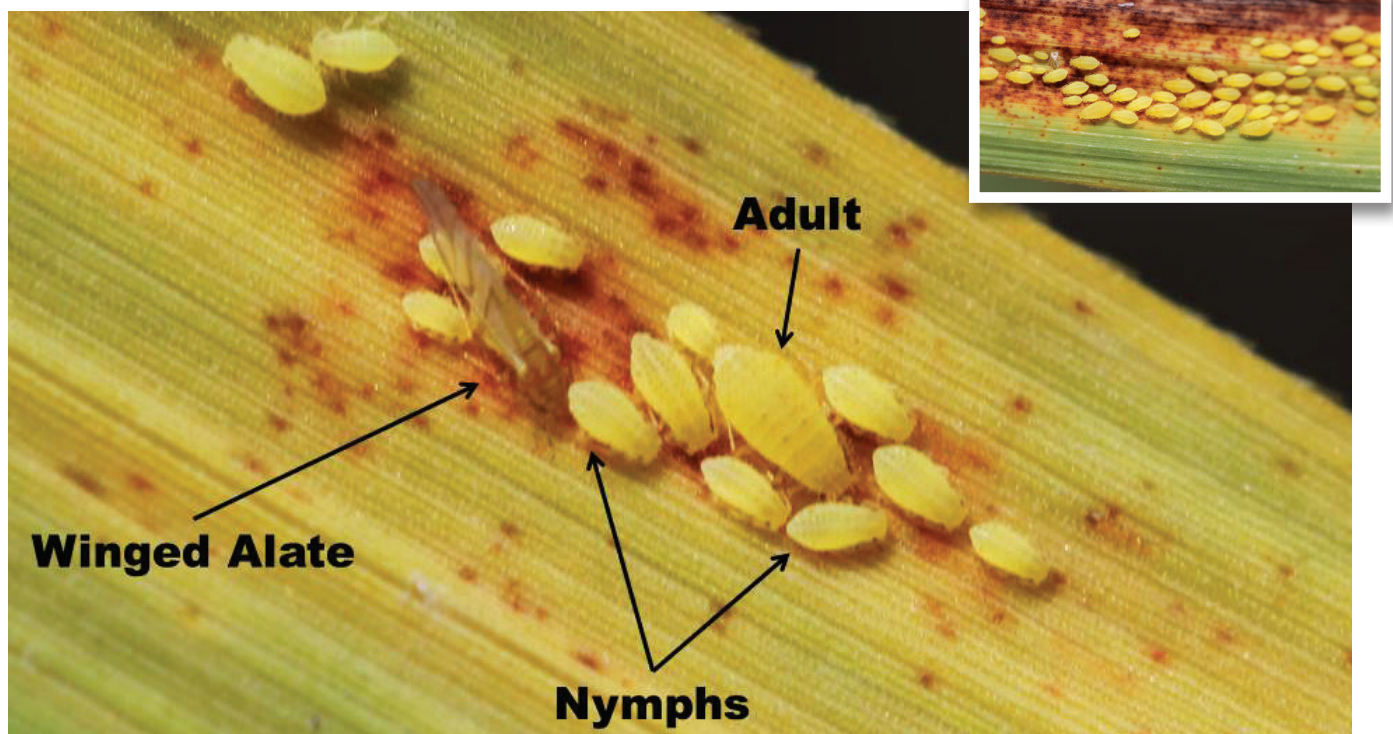


Figure 1: Yellow sugarcane aphid life stages. Photo by B.E. Wilson.

YSA pest status

The YSA is a pest of sugarcane in Louisiana, Florida, the Caribbean, Central America and South America. It also attacks grain sorghum throughout the Midwest. Infestations of sugarcane in Louisiana typically occur in the spring. YSA feeding causes yellowing and reddening of sugarcane leaves (Fig. 2). The effects of this feeding on sugarcane growth and yield are not well understood, but

in most cases it is thought to be of minimal impact. Yield losses from YSAs have not been documented in Louisiana sugarcane, but infestations may slow growth in the spring. While symptoms appear to be severe in young sugarcane, they typically aren't noticeable once plants begin to enter the "grand growth" phase. The YSA is known to be a vector of sugarcane mosaic virus, but other aphid species are thought to be more important in spreading the virus.

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YSA Control

No controls are consistently recommended for the YSA. The only insecticides labeled for aphid control in sugarcane are pyrethroids, and these products are not particularly effective against this pest. Pyrethroids have

potential to disrupt populations of natural enemies, leading to greater infestations in the weeks following the application. YSA populations usually decline naturally by mid-summer. Heavy rainfall and natural enemies, which include ladybeetles, can suppress infestations.



Figure 2: Leaf chlorosis in sugarcane caused by YSA feeding. Photo by B.E. Wilson.



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