

Bemisia tabaci: risk to Poinsettia



Fig 1. Adult *Bemisia tabaci* © Fera Science Ltd.



Fig 2. Pupa (fourth larval stage) of *Bemisia tabaci* © Fera Science Ltd.



Fig 3. Inspection of poinsettias in glasshouse © Crown copyright

- ***Bemisia tabaci*** (tobacco whitefly) is a pest of a wide range of plants, including **vegetables, salad crops and ornamentals**, and is a vector of more than 110 viruses. It is **unlikely to establish outdoors** in the UK, **but outbreaks occur in protected crop situations**.
- The pest is **frequently intercepted on ornamentals** in the UK and in 2018 there was a higher than usual incidence on Poinsettias grown in other parts of Europe, leading to cancellations of deliveries and growers in the UK suffering from shortages.
- *Bemisia tabaci* can cause **direct damage by feeding** and **indirect damage through honeydew deposits**. However, the **viruses vectored by the pest have the greatest impact and can cause total failure of susceptible crops**.

Consider carefully your sourcing of Poinsettias – protect your business and others by only using reputable and authorised suppliers of Poinsettias

If you suspect the presence of *Bemisia tabaci*, please inform the relevant authority (see below for details).

For **England and Wales**, contact your local **APHA Plant Health and Seeds Inspector** or the **PHSI Headquarters**, York.

Tel: 0300 1000 313 (please select option 3 when calling)

Email: planthealth.info@apha.gov.uk

For **Scotland**, contact the **Scottish Government's Horticulture and Marketing Unit**:

Agricultural crops contact the local RPID officer: <http://www.gov.scot/Topics/farmingrural/Agriculture/AOcontacts/contacts>

For non-agricultural crops, email: hort.marketing@gov.scot

For **Northern Ireland**, contact the **DAERA Plant Health Inspection Branch**:

Tel: 0300 200 7847 Email: planthealth@daera-ni.gov.uk

Web: <https://www.daera-ni.gov.uk/topics/plant-and-tree-health>

For additional information on UK Plant Health please see:

<https://planthealthportal.defra.gov.uk/pests-and-diseases/uk-plant-health-risk-register/>

<https://planthealthportal.defra.gov.uk/>

<https://www.gov.uk/plant-health-controls>

<http://www.gov.scot/Topics/farmingrural/Agriculture/plant/PlantHealth/PlantDiseases>

<https://www.daera-ni.gov.uk>