

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, in York:

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

Email: planthealth.info@apha.gov.uk

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

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

Email: hort.marketing@gov.scot

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

For Northern Ireland, contact DAERA Plant Health Inspection Branch:

Tel: 0300 200 7847

Email: planthealth@daera-ni.gov.uk

Web: www.daera-ni.gov.uk