

Natural Enemies of Crop Pests in Hawai'i



What to look for

Mites are not insects; they are more closely related to spiders. Adult mites have four pairs of legs, like spiders, and two body parts, rather than the insect's three. Mites can approach prey in areas not reachable by chemical sprays. Look for them in areas of spider mite and thrips infestation.



Predatory mite feeding on western flower thrips larva.

Predatory Mites

(predators)

Appearance

Adults are very small, about 1/32 inch, teardrop shaped, orange-red, tan, or brown and are fast moving.

The nymphs look like the adults, only smaller.

Crops protected

greenhouse crops field crops affected by spider mites or thrips

Pests attacked

spider mite eggs, larvae, nymphs, and adults thrips fungus gnats small insects and their eggs

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Top: Mini bell peppers Bottom: Mango Tree



Predatory Mites

Predatory mites are among the most successful biocontrol agents. Their numbers can be very high on crops that produce a lot of pollen, such as sweet pepper, fruit trees, and sweet corn. Reducing use of insecticide sprays may also encourage predatory mite populations.

Adult predatory mite with spider mite eggs.

Predators

Predators are beneficial insects that attack, kill, or consume a wide variety of common pests. Males, females, immatures, and adults may all be predatory. Predators include lacewings, flies, spiders, beetles, true bugs, and predatory mites.



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