

“How do you control whiteflies? They are all over my vegetables!”

With a very strong blast of water, each morning, for several days in a row. Whitefly populations always build up on certain plants in the mid- to late-summer. The females oviposit (lay their eggs) in the morning, and won't lay their eggs on a wet leaf surface. A vigorous rinsing with the hose can drown some adults, and knock off and kill the larvae. Then the remaining eggs hatch and those larvae become vulnerable the next day.



I'm not talking about a little shower here. We don't just want *clean* whiteflies, we want *dead* whiteflies. We use a nozzle that doubles the power of the water, and we wash the plants with an up-sweeping motion to scour off the undersides of the leaves. You will not harm the plant! Morning is best to allow the leaves to dry by the end of the day. This is fine for your vegetables, herbs, ornamental flowers, and landscape plants.

Vigorously washing plants is an effective pest control strategy for mites, aphids, and leafhoppers as well. It is more effective than most conventional and organic pesticides, if you are thorough and persistent, and it is not harmful to anything. Learn which plants are common hosts and resting plants for whiteflies, and get in the habit of brushing or shaking those as you walk by to monitor populations. When you see the adult flies flutter up, wash.

Note: dragonflies are very effective predators of whiteflies. If you have a water feature in your yard, you may find they provide natural control.

