

Dusky Ladybird

Scymnus loewii – Dusky Ladybird

The Dusky Ladybird is a small predatory ladybird. It is primarily an aphid predator, however it will also predate on a large variety of alternative prey, including psyllid and whitefly eggs, mites, and the eggs of larger insects such as butterflies and moths.

The Dusky Ladybird appears to survive well in glasshouse grown capsicums when feeding on the peach aphid, and colonises cucumber as well. The use of this species is still experimental, and there are no guarantees that they will colonise your crop or eat a particular aphid species. They are known predators of aphids from the genera *Myzus* and *Aphis*.

In New Zealand we call them ladybirds, much the same as the British do, however in other parts of the world they are known as ladybugs.

The Pest – Aphids (as well as Psyllids)

Many different species of aphid are present in New Zealand, and not all species are necessarily suitable prey for the **Dusky Ladybird**. Some aphid species are quite specific to particular crops, while other species infest a wide range of crops.

Aphids are soft-bodied insects that have globular bodies, long thin legs and antennae. Adult body length is normally 2-3 mm, and colour varies from pale yellow, green to dark brown or black. Some forms have wings and they can disperse rapidly.

Under optimum conditions, the life cycle of an aphid can be completed in 10-12 days. Many species reproduce asexually, and therefore populations can build up very rapidly.

Aphids feed with piercing-sucking mouthparts and can cause stunting and distortion, especially to younger leaves. Aphids are often plant virus vectors, and therefore rapid and effective control is essential to minimize crop losses.

Symptoms and signs of aphids include:

- Stunting and distortion of the leaves and flowers
- Yellowing and wilting of leaves
- Honey dew and sooty mould present on the plants
- Aphids visible on the stem, leaves and flower buds



Larvae of *Scymnus* have a mealy bug like appearance

The Solution – Dusky Ladybird

The Dusky Ladybird is a small predatory ladybird of about 3-4 mm in length.

Adults and juveniles are aphid predators, feeding on aphids of all life stages. Larvae paralyse aphids and suck their body fluids out, generally through a leg or antenna.

Both adults and larvae predate on the tomato/potato psyllid, both eggs and juveniles.

The Dusky Ladybird undergoes an egg stage and 4 larval stages before pupating and emerging as an adult. Development time from egg to adult takes around three weeks at 25°C, and longer at lower temperatures.

Eggs are tiny and laid singly on the woodier parts of the plant.

Our ladybirds are reared in our insectary, we do not collect ladybirds from the wild (for sale) as is practised in other parts of the world.

Release adult ladybirds at night, as they will not fly in the dark.

Release and Storage Instructions

- It is best to **release adult ladybirds in the evening**, as they may otherwise fly off before becoming accustomed to the new environment
- Place in areas with high aphid or pest numbers
- Store in a cool place, out of direct sunlight. Preferably between 10 and 15 degrees
- DO NOT REFRIGERATE

Price

PRICE: \$25.00 per 50 Adults (minimum order) plus GST and Freight

or \$15.00 per 100 eggs (minimum order) plus GST and Freight