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| |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  | | --- | --- | | Aphids  * Kingdom: Animal * Phylum: Arthropoda * Class: Insecta * Order: Hemiptera * Family: * Genus: * Species: |  | |  | | | General Information:  Aphids are a member of an order of insects often referred to as true bugs. The mouthparts of "true bugs" have evolved into a syringe like structure used to pierce the flesh of their food source and suck out the fluids within. Aphids feed on a variety of different species of plants. These aphids were photographed on the stem of a [dandelion](http://docs.google.com/herbs/dandelion.html). Like most insects aphids are r-strategists and can increase in number very rapidly when food is in abundance. Their numbers on a food plant can become so large that growth of the plant can be stunted. The plant may even be killed as a consequence of the transfer of pathogens (virus/bacteria). Transfer of aphids from one plant to another can occur as a consequence of wind blowing smaller individuals from one plant to the next or by animals that visit the plant and inadvertently carry the aphid to its new location. Aphids need to draw in large volumes of phloem sap from the host plant in an effort to get more than just carbohydrates as nutrients. This lead to aphids expelling a significant amount of the carbohydrate rich fluid from the tip of their abdomen. Ants have been observed protecting "herds" of aphids and collecting the "honeydew" as a source of their nutrition. The ants will even stroke the aphids abdomen with their antennae as a sort of "milking" in an effort to force out larger volumes of honeydew. [Lady bugs](http://docs.google.com/ladybug.html), [soldier flies](http://docs.google.com/soldier_fly.html), parasitic wasps, and a variety of other insects prey upon aphids and help to keep their numbers in control. | | |  | | |  |  |  |  | | --- | | Copyright © 2008 Amatory Valley High. All Rights Reserved. Reproduction in whole or in part in any form or medium without express written permission of Amador Valley is prohibited. | |