

# Research stops *macrolophus* from being a pest

Tomato growers struggling to control *macrolophus* can now use it for its original purpose, as a biocontrol agent, thanks to HDC research led by consultant Rob Jacobsen. *Macrolophus*, a predatory insect, was developed to control whitefly but can cause direct damage to vine and cherry varieties and has itself become a serious pest on some nurseries.

The work set out to shape a pesticide-free IPM programme for organic crops: just over 5% of the UK tomato growing area is certified as organic with retailers looking for more. IPM is more difficult in organic crops because production is based on speciality varieties that tend to be more susceptible to pests, while

use of certain key pesticides is excluded.

"At the start of the project, *macrolophus* was the number one pest," said Dr Jacobsen, speaking at the Tomato Conference in Coventry last month. "We have developed a method of culling populations with natural pyrethrins and are now able to use *macrolophus* as an important biocontrol."

The findings have also informed another HDC project looking to improve IPM in year-round tomato crops. Whitefly is a problem at all sites cropping continuously in the UK. "We are just beginning to evaluate an IPM programme to control whitefly based on *macrolophus*," said Dr Jacobsen. "I thought this



CSL/Crown copyright

**Macrolophus, a predatory insect can be culled to prevent it becoming a problem on nurseries.**

would be inconceivable 12 months ago."

He added that there had been reports of failure in whitefly control, through other natural enemies not working as well as they used to. While

there was as yet no firm evidence, it has been suggested that the sulphur used to control powdery mildew might be to blame. "I think this is something we should look into," he said.

## Danziger protects its intellectual rights

Danziger, based in Israel, has won the case it filed against Biological Industries Beit Haemk, Israel concerning the plant rights of its trademark brand Gypsophila variety known by its commercial name 'Million Stars'.

The court in Haag ruled that a high degree of genetic similarity was found between Danziger's Million Stars and 'Bambino'. The court said: "We must assume... that the Danziger version, is the correct version and that Bambino was produced by means of derivation from the Million Stars, and as being such, there were no differences between the two, a matter which Danziger appealed against and has proven its position – therefore the Bambino should be regarded as a derived variety." In view of this, the court issued injunctions against Biological Industries' Beit Haemek and other defendants to stop marketing the variety. The court also ordered Beit Haemek and other growers in Ethiopia and Israel to pay €65,000 (£45,000) in court costs.

## Real IPM Company wins Norah Stucken Award

The Norah Stucken Award this year went to The Real IPM Company and was presented at the IoH's AGM held at Writtle College.

Lin Blunt accepted the Norah Stucken Award on behalf of Dr Henry Wainwright (a former professor at Writtle College) and Louise Labuschange co-owners of The Real IPM Company.

Lin Blunt said "The Real IPM Company received the award in recognition of the successful development and application of biological control systems for Kenyan horticulture.

The fact that the IoH can look outside the UK demonstrates there is an appreciation that horticulture is a truly global affair and that what occurs in places like Kenya influences what happens in the UK and what appears on the UK supermarket shelves."

The award commemorates Norah Stucken, the long-standing publisher of the *Grower*.

## Catching up fast

Next year, from 20 – 22 February, Salon du Vegetal will welcome visitors to its 23rd trade exhibition.

With its continual growth and popularity the organisers feel they are now enjoying the same status as other leading international horticultural trade shows held in Europe.

This ornamentals plant fair, held in Angers, the heart of France's principal horticultural area, accommodated 600 exhibitors last year and attracted some 17,000 professional visitors.

For more details telephone +33 (0) 241791417. E-mail: [salon@bhr-vegetal.com](mailto:salon@bhr-vegetal.com) or visit their website [www.salon-du-vegetal.com](http://www.salon-du-vegetal.com)

## Next European Pack Trials

The Fleuroselect group of breeders has agreed to bring the dates for the 2008 Pack Trials forward. The new dates are 21 to 25 April 2008.