

Cannabis Aphid

Cannabis aphid (*Phorodon cannabis*) is found on the leaves and stems of *Cannabis*. Overall coloration can be variable; pale yellowish forms are common, particularly indoors, but forms that are darker green and pale brown occur. *Cannabis* is the only known host of this aphid. Presumably it is normally sustained through winter on indoor grown plants. Overwintering plants located in protected sites may also be potential outdoor hosts between growing seasons.

Cannabis aphid, and other aphids, suck fluids from the phloem of the plant. In high populations this can result in reduced growth and wilting, although plants that are well hydrated can well tolerate this type of injury. In outdoor plantings there are normally numerous natural enemies (e.g., lady beetles, flower flies, green lacewings, parasitic wasps) that limit aphids, of all species, to levels that do not produce significant plant injury. In indoor planting these natural enemies are normally not present, unless introduced.

Cannabis aphid is very similar in appearance to **hop aphid**, *Phorodon humuli*, and can only be distinguished by closely examining, under a microscope the

area at the front of the head. Hop aphid is a common species found on hops in North America and it is also reported to develop on Cannabis. Hop aphid has a life cycle that involves alternating between different host plants through the year, with certain *Prunus* species (cherries, plums) serving as the hosts on which it survives (as an egg stage) between outdoor growing seasons. Green peach aphid (*Myzus persicae*) and bean aphid (*Aphis fabae*) are among the other aphids that have been reported as feeding on hemp, but these have not yet been confirmed from hemp in Colorado.



Cannabis aphids. Only wingless forms are present in the upper picture but a mixture of winged and immature wingless are in the lower picture.



A light form of the cannabis aphid collected in a greenhouse planting.

Rice root aphid (*Rhopalosiphum abdominalis*), which develops on roots of Cannabis, has been noted to be a common species in Cannabis grown as indoor production. This is an unusual species in that it develops on roots, and can thrive in very moist conditions, including hydroponic culture. Rice root aphid is discussed in a separate section.

Hemiptera: Aphididae



(Top) Wingless rice root aphids at base of rice plant. (Bottom) Winged rice root aphids trapped on Cannabis leaf.