Late Season Whitefly Control

We are nearing the end of October and the poinsettia crops look good across the state. There are a few botrytis problems, but otherwise the crop looks good so far. One question that comes up in late October is late season whitefly control. The problem is that some growers report that early varieties are beginning the bract transition to color. Applications of pesticides to poinsettia with bracts is risky since there are so many variables. Differences in cultivars, culture and environmental conditions may increase or decrease bract sensitivity to pesticides. Always test a small portion of your crop before treating your entire crop. Whiteflies also tend to be localized in hot spots and may be more prevalent on certain varieties or in certain houses. If that’s the case then spot treating may be best.

After bracts color, foliar sprays of Sanmite, or Azatin + Decathlon have been reported to be effective. It is recommended to use the surfactant CapSil when using Sanmite (wettable powder) to minimize visible residue. Note that it has also been recommended to use only one application of CapSil in a week on the same plants. Marathon II has also been used on bracts, however, growers have reported slow results with a late season application. Other neonicotinoids, such as Flagship, Safari and TriStar are also labeled safe on bracts as well as the insect growth regulator, Talus. When in doubt about pesticide safety on bracts, contact the technical representative for the product you plan to use.

Many growers are trying to avoid using neonicotinoids on poinsettia crops since some of their suppliers are requesting plants not treated with neonicotinoids. These growers are looking for alternative materials to use to control whiteflies. One of the materials that many growers are turning to is spirotetramat, made by Bayer Chemical Company and distributed by OHP. When applied as foliar application it is effective shortly after application. The spirotetramat is most effective on immature stages of whiteflies, aphids and spider mites. It does not impact eggs and does not work well for adult stages of insects.

Hope this helps. Let me know if you are having special problems with late season whitefly control at sgill@umd.edu.
Information for Poinsettia Growers
Electronic Grower Resources Online (also known as e-Gro) has posted several new fact sheets on poinsettias and nutrition written by Dr. Brian Whipker of North Carolina State University.

Check them out at: http://e-gro.org/alerts.php

Greenhouse Tour Cancelled:
Hillcrest Nursery - October 23, 2014

Fall 2014 Advanced Nutrient Management Training:
BMPs and Technology to Increase Efficiency

Time: 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.
Locations (same program at each site):
November 6th at Wye Research and Education Center, Queenstown, MD
November 12th - Montgomery County Extension Office, Derwood, MD
November 25th - Baltimore County Extension Office, Hunt Valley, MD

For details see the announcement