

Early season aphid activity

The temperature during January and February is critical to aphid activity in the forthcoming growing season. The mean temperature during this period at both SASA (Edinburgh) and SCRI (Dundee) was about 1°C warmer than the 35-year mean. The Jan/Feb temperature in 2004 indicates that the first flights of aphids will be about two weeks earlier than in an average year and the total aphids caught before 1 August will be slightly higher than usual (see Table 1).

Table 1

East Craigs	2004 Prediction	75% Confidence Limits	2003 Observation
<i>Myzus persicae</i>	31 May	1 May to 22 July	29 May
<i>Macrosiphum euphorbiae</i>	14 May	23 April to 3 June	13 April
Dundee	2004 Prediction	75% Confidence Limits	2003 Observation
<i>Myzus persicae</i>	6 June	11 May to 2 July	21 April
<i>Macrosiphum euphorbiae</i>	21 May	23 April to 19 June	27 May

The 75% confidence limits quoted in Table 1 provide an estimate of the expected accuracy of the 2004 prediction, i.e. 3 times out of 4 the prediction should fall within these limits. The average date of first capture for the Peach-Potato aphid (*Myzus persicae*) over the last 35 years is 15 June at Edinburgh (17 June at Dundee). The mean date for catching the first Potato aphid (*Macrosiphum euphorbiae*) at Edinburgh is 23 May (2 June at Dundee).

Total catches of potato aphids are likely to be slightly higher than usual. The model prediction is that 29 *M. persicae* will be caught at Edinburgh before 1 August (75% confidence interval of 7 to 106 aphids). At Dundee, the predicted catch over the same period is 27 *M. persicae* (75% confidence interval of 6 to 110). If these predictions are borne out then 2004 will rank 12th out of the last 35 years in terms of the abundance of *M. persicae*.