

Trending Now: The Latest Articles From Allan Armitage!

# Production

# 4 Things You Need To Know About Implementing Biological Controls

By: **Rick Yates**

April 18, 2016

Email
Print
Facebook 33
  
Google
LinkedIn 103
  
Twitter
Pinterest

*Parasitized aphid mummies left behind by Ladybird beetle larvae, voracious beneficial predators that can consume several aphids per day.*

*Photo courtesy of John Speaker, Speaker's Gardens*

Grower interest in biological control agents (BCAs) continues to

increase. The initial transition to BCAs requires commitment and a bit of learning with solid support from an informed supplier. While this can feel like a hurdle to some, there is more and better information available to

Previous Article



April 18, 2016  
Meister Media Worldwide Introduces New Website

Next Article



April 18, 2016  
Biocontrols Conference Highlights Critical Role Of Integrated...

## Latest Stories



July 7, 2017

**New Tools for Your Crop Protection Arsenal in the Green...**



July 5, 2017

**Tips From a Top 100 Grower for Effective Thrips Control**



May 30, 2017

**BioWorks Launches New Biofungicide for Botrytis Control**



May 27, 2017

**How to Overcome Biocontrol Challenges by Thinking Outsi...**

May 20, 2017

assist growers than ever before. Here are four ideas for successfully getting started with biocontrols at your greenhouse.

### 1. Start Small

If you're on the fence when it comes to BCAs, consider starting small. Really small! Nematodes are a great entry point into biocontrols. They provide tried-and-true control for fungus gnats, as well as effectively reducing thrips populations by attacking soil-borne pupal stages. Nematodes are also compatible with most traditional pesticide programs, which further helps to ease the transition.

### 2. Know Which Pesticides Pair Well With BCAs

Your supplier can offer details regarding pesticides that are compatible with one or more BCAs. With careful guidance, you may be able to use certain pesticides to keep pests below damaging thresholds without hurting your biocontrol program.

### 3. Take It One Greenhouse At A Time

This approach gives you a chance to step into this new endeavor with less risk. A house full of vegetables and herbs would be a prime candidate since there are fewer effective pesticides labeled for edible crops in greenhouses. Build on your success and expand into the rest of the range as your confidence grows.

### 4. Enlist Your Supplier's Help

Work together to review your pesticide application records for the previous three months to determine if any may interfere with starting your program. A transition period to "softer," shorter-residual pesticides may be necessary before you can safely introduce BCAs. From here, you'll be on your way to success with BCAs.

### Biocontrols Checklist

Before implementing a biocontrols program at your greenhouse, use this checklist to make sure you are prepared to use them successfully.

**1. Do I understand pest and biological control agent (BCA) life cycles?** Understanding the biology of insect



**Biocontrols: A Practical Option for Cannabis**

May 18, 2017

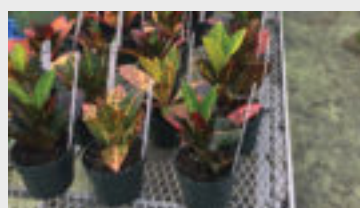


**How to Increase Branching and Flower Bud Production of ...**



May 15, 2017

**How to Identify and Mitigate Herbicide Contamination in...**



May 4, 2017

**Bayer Altus Update: Neonic Insect Control Alternative N...**



May 2, 2017

**Pollinator Update: The Bumblebee on the Endangered List...**



April 25, 2017

**Out-Of-This-World Plant Nutrition: Fertilizer Company I...**



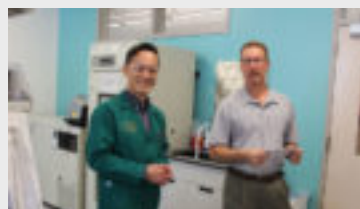
April 8, 2017

**OHP Enters Biocontrols Market With New Product Line**



April 2, 2017

**Dramm Upgrades Its Coldfogger Low-Volume Sprayer to Imp...**



March 20, 2017

**AgBiome's New Zio Biofungicide Receives EPA Regis...**

March 20, 2017

and mite pests is crucial for all types of pest control programs.

**2. Have I reduced incoming pest pressure?** Segregate incoming shipments for careful scouting and treat with BCA-friendly pesticides if needed.

**3. Do I practice strong sanitation?** Sanitation is crucial. Weeds and “pet plants” can undermine a biocontrol program by providing safe haven for insects and mites.

**4. Have I scheduled my BCA orders in advance?**

Unlike pesticides, BCAs are alive. You cannot warehouse them to anticipate your needs. Forecasting becomes easier as you gain experience.

**5. Do I practice vigilant scouting using sticky cards and plant inspections?** Remember to track pests and beneficial organisms. Early detection of pests is critical because few BCAs are capable of controlling high pest populations.

**6. Do I understand chemical compatibility?** Know which pesticides are compatible with the BCAs that you intend to use before you release them. Quick action may be necessary to save a biocontrol program, so it is important to be prepared in advance.

**7. Do I have the full support of my growing team?**

Everyone involved in the production of the crops needs to be on board with using BCAs, including managers and ownership. Biocontrol is a team sport.

**8. Do I have realistic expectations?** BCAs can be very effective, but they are not a simple solution. Learning requires commitment and some trial and error. (How did your first crop of poinsettias turn out?) Failures are not permanent. Clean it up and try again.

---

**TOPICS: Biocontrols, Griffin**

---

**Leave a Reply**

**More From Crop Inputs...**

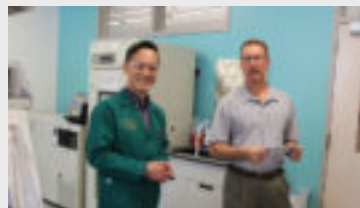


**How You Can Market the Benefits of Biocontrols**



February 28, 2017

**OHP Launches New Ovicide/Miticide, Announces Partnershi...**



February 26, 2017

**AgBiome Will Enter the Ornamentals Market With a New Bi...**



February 23, 2017

**4 Pathogens to Prepare For in 2017**



February 7, 2017

**Boxwood Blight Detection in Illinois Has Growers on Ale...**



July 7, 2017

## New Tools for Your Crop Protection Arsenal in the Greenhouse



July 5, 2017

## Tips From a Top 100 Grower for Effective Thrips Control



July 4, 2017

## How to Manage the 3 M's of Poinsettias: Manganese, Molybdenum, and Magnesium