

Pest Profile



Photo credit: (Left & Right) University of Nebraska-Lincoln

Common Name: Sugarcane Aphid

Scientific Name: *Melanaphis sacchari*

Order and Family: Hemiptera, Aphididae

Size and Appearance:

	Length (mm)	Appearance
Egg		Reproduction in North America has been largely asexual, but sexual reproduction has been reported in Asia.
Larva/Nymph		The nymphal stage looks similar to the adult stage. Body color ranges from gray to light yellow. The feet (tarsi), and antennae are dark in color. There are two tube like structures that stick out of the end of the abdomen called cornicles. Like the tarsi and antennae, the cornicles are also dark in color. When cool conditions of winter and spring are present, the nymphs have a gray casting over the body. Summer morphs are typically lighter in color.
Adult	2 mm	The body color of the adult sugarcane aphid ranges from gray to tan to light yellow. The cornicles, tarsi, and antennae are dark in color. When cool conditions of winter and spring are present, the adults have a gray casting over the body. Summer morphs are typically lighter in color. The alate or winged adults look like the large wingless aphids, except the winged adults can have black markings on the hardened plates (sclerites) of the body. The winged adults also contain black hardened structures at the base of the wings.

Type of feeder (Chewing, sucking, etc.): Nymphs and adults have piercing-sucking mouthparts.

Host/s: The nymphs and adults feed primarily on sugarcane and sorghum. Other than sorghum and sugarcane, sugarcane aphids can develop on grasses in the genera *Oryza spp.* (rice), *Panicum* (panicgrass), and *Echnicola*.

Description of Damage (larvae and adults): Sugarcane aphid is considered a new pest of sorghum in North America. Initially, sugarcane aphid feeding causes purpling in young leaves, yellowing later and

finally leaf death. Infestations can lead to plant stunting and reducing grain production. Heavy infestation on reproductive stages of sorghum can produce large amount honeydew which can interfere with harvest. In sugarcane, feeding by *M. sacchari* causes minimal symptomology unless there is a heavy infestation, which leads to growth of black sooty mold on leaves covered with aphid-produced honeydew. The sugarcane aphid's potential to be a vector of viruses such as sugarcane yellow leaf virus, red-millet leaf virus, and sugarcane mosaic virus are of importance to sugarcane growers. Populations of sugarcane aphid can reach extremely high densities in sugarcane in Louisiana, but infestations are usually localized.

References:

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