

## The good fight against insect and mite pests

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Have you heard the latest tips, tricks and industry advice? Vine Talk author, Dr Brandy (Belinda) Rawnsley takes a look at the issues facing grape growers.

*By Brandy Rawnsley*

With spring comes the influx of insect and mite pests ready to feed on supple growing leaves and berries.

Chewing insects like light brown apple moth (LBAM) can cause direct yield loss from feeding on developing bunches and this feeding damage can also increase the risk of Botrytis infection. Mite infestation can lead to malformed and stunted shoots, leaf chlorosis and subsequent reduced yield.

Integrated pest management (IPM) strategies are vital at keeping pest numbers low, but it's when populations reach damaging thresholds that insecticide application may be necessary.

As not all seasons pose insect problems, previous vineyard history and early monitoring is vital to accurately identify the pest problem. Common sucking and chewing pests include grapevine mites, grapevine moth, light brown apple moth (LBAM) and weevils.

Understanding insect biology and critical times for infestation will inform when best to monitor. The aim is to detect the pest before they do any damage. For example, early monitoring for light brown apple moth (LBAM) should involve looking for egg masses on basal leaves and larvae on shoot tips, as

well as characteristic webbing inside bunches.

When regional and varietal pest thresholds indicate pest numbers may cause economic damage, select the appropriate product and time of application.

We want to use insecticides that are IPM compatible, where possible, to allow natural predators to do their job. Effective, targeted spraying minimises the potential impact of chemicals on beneficial insects and the environment.

Insecticides such as VOLIAM TARGO® offer growers the chance to control more pests with one application. Having two actives: chlorantraniliprole (Group 28) affects Lepidopteran pests (such as LBAM), whilst abamectin (Group 6) acts primarily on mites.

One of the advantages of using VOLIAM TARGO with translaminar movement, is that it penetrates the leaf very quickly so that predatory mites and wasps are less exposed to the insecticide. With this protection locked into the leaf, any insect and mite pests that feed on this treated leaf ingest a fatal dose. With VOLIAM TARGO there's also suppression of Garden weevils, which have little or no natural enemies.

Another advantage with VOLIAM TARGO is its long residual activity, with one spray providing up to 21 days of Lepidopteran control and at least four weeks of mite control.

As with any good spray program, coverage and correct timing ensures effective pest control. By having a targeted approach to insecticide use, we can continue to implement IPM strategies and look after the natural enemies in the vineyard.

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