

How to Scout

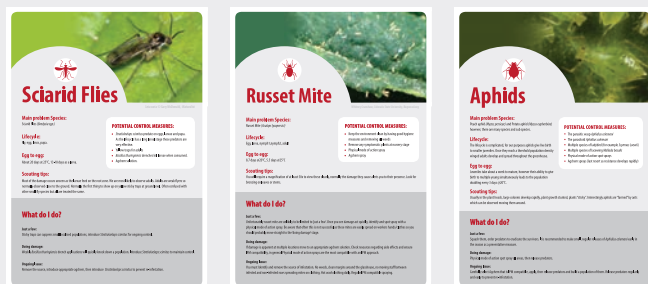


Pest recognition

Know your enemy. The crop scout must be familiar with the appearance of common pests (and diseases) and the signs/damage they leave. tomatoesnz.co.nz provides regularly updated resources on common pests.

Frequency

Scouting frequency must be matched to the lifecycle duration of common pests. These can be found on the Action Cards.



Alternate rows once a week gives a 2 week rotation, this is a favourable duration for spotting most common pests as small (first generation) infestations.

Move quickly, stop at any sign of pests or every 10m (post?) for a more thorough inspection. Mark and record the location of any pest that requires further attention.

If every plant is carefully inspected scouting will take too long.

Instead, the scout should move quickly looking for signs of any pest which varies from leaf damage to the actual pest on the leaves. i.e. psyllid sugars, caterpillar damage. Once the scout is experienced any deviation in appearance from healthy will be obvious.

Scouts should be partly responsible for the pest control programme. This includes spot spraying, distribution of BCAs, and assessing their progress. Observing IPM success increases enthusiasm for the whole programme.

Equipment required

Use a 30X hand lens to make identification easier. A lower magnification will make it difficult to determine if pests are still alive.

Use sticky traps and pheromone traps to help you scout. The first signs of flying pests will appear on the sticky cards. These must be renewed regularly. Pheromone traps are most useful not only to indicate pest presence, but to determine species.

Carry a row sheet (greenhouse map) and flagging tape so you can mark and record any areas for future spot treatments or BCA release. If BCAs are released it is useful to record the date on the flagging tape so the efficacy of the treatment can be observed. Only remove flags once the pest is controlled.

Scouts should carry a small clear container to contain any unknown pest/disease for further identification. It can be useful to keep a caterpillar alive to complete its lifecycle as moths are often useful in species identification.