Animal pests

Tarsonemids

Biology

Tarsonemids (Tarsonemidae) are very small, about 0.2-0.3 mm long, elliptic, transparent mites that live hidden directly at the vegetation point of orchids, i.e. in the heart of the plants. Their fourth pair of legs is always different from the third one, in Tarsonemus pallidus Banks it is markedly stronger. The mites multiply in high temperatures and high relative humidity. Development from egg to adult takes about 14 days in temperatures between 20 and 25° C. The mites are sensitive to light and prefer young soft plant tissue.

Damage

The leaves are bowed, blossom stalks are shorter, sometimes with lateral necroses, and the blossoms are deformed. The stem base sometimes shows smaller rotten spots. Not often found on Phalaenopsis. More frequently on Aerangis, Paphiopedilum or Dendrobium.

Control

Reduce humidity, if possible. Spraying with acaricides has to be carried out repeatedly.

Biological plant protection

Biological plant protection is possible using Amblyseius predatory mites. As the predatory mites are difficult to settle in Orchids, we recommend distribution in small paper bags. The predatory mites can slowly leave the bags and settle in the stands.

Animal pests

Tarsonemids

Aerangis: soft-bodied mites

Paphiopedilum: soft-bodied mites

Phalaenopsis: soft-bodied mites