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## ***Strawberry: Spittlebugs***

*Use Integrated Pest Management (IPM) for successful plant problem management.*

### ***Biology***

Spittlebugs feed on many plants. On strawberry, the nymphs feed on the leaves and leaf stems, preferring the tender new growth. Infested plants are stunted, and leaves may be distorted or killed. They may also feed on buds, blossoms, and fruit, which can be distorted. Spittlebug nymphs are pale to green in color and are typically covered with a distinctive white, foamy mass of protective spittle. The nymphs and spittle are present for 1-2 months on the plants beginning around April or May. The adult spittlebugs are mottled gray or brown. They are about 1/4" long. Spittlebugs overwinter as eggs laid in the fall.

### ***Management Options***

#### **Non-Chemical Management**

- ~ Hand-picking may be sufficient control in home gardens.
- ~ Wash spittle from plants with a strong stream of water.
- ~ Several predators including yellowjackets prey on spittlebugs. Avoid use of broad-spectrum insecticides which kill beneficial insects.

*Select non-chemical management options as your first choice!*

#### **Chemical Management**

***IMPORTANT: Visit Home and Garden Fact Sheets for more information on using pesticides***

Apply when blossom buds appear. DO NOT apply when open blossoms are present to avoid bee poisoning. Control of spittlebugs with chemicals is almost impossible once spittle masses are present.

**Listed below are examples of pesticides that are legal in Washington. Always read and follow all label directions.**

- ~ Bug Buster-O [Organic]
  - active ingredient: pyrethrins
  - EPA reg no: 1021-1771-54705
- ~ This list may not include all products registered for this use.

*Strawberry: Spittlebugs*

*Images*



~ Caption: Spittle bug foam  
~ Photo by: A.L. Antonelli