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IN CONTROL—NATURALLY

NATURAL INSECT CONTROL NEWSLETTER

CGC 2026 UPDATE:

Biological Controls Take Centre Stage at the Canadian Greenhouse Conference 2026

The 2026 **Canadian Greenhouse Conference**, held October 7–8 in Niagara Falls, reinforced an important message for greenhouse growers: biological control is no longer a niche addition to greenhouse production. It is becoming an essential part of practical, sustainable Integrated Pest Management (IPM).

Researchers, industry professionals and biological control specialists shared the latest findings and strategies for managing challenging pests, including aphids, thrips and spider mites, while reducing reliance on conventional pesticides.

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Why Biological Control Matters
Biological control uses living organisms—including predatory mites, parasitic wasps, beneficial insects, nematodes and beneficial microorganisms—to manage insect pests and plant diseases.

For greenhouse growers, these tools offer opportunities to protect crops, support worker safety, reduce pesticide use and meet growing expectations for environmentally responsible production.

A key message throughout the conference was that biological control works best as part of a broader IPM strategy. Regular crop scouting, sticky-card monitoring, good sanitation, preventative releases and careful pesticide selection all contribute to successful biological programs.

Managing Emerging Thrips in Ornamentals
Dr. Rose Buitenhuis of Vineland Research and Innovation Centre presented research toward developing an IPM strategy for *Thrips parvispinus*, an invasive thrips species posing a growing concern for Canadian greenhouse ornamental producers.

Her presentation explored the pest's biology, host preferences and potential pathways into greenhouse operations, emphasizing the importance of prevention, early detection and coordinated management.

For ornamental growers, the message was clear: preventing an introduction is often easier than managing an established infestation. Inspecting incoming plant material, monitoring crops closely and implementing preventative biological controls can help reduce the risk of serious pest outbreaks.

AEnvironmental Conditions Influence Biological Control
University of Guelph researcher Karli Barton explored how LED lighting and low nighttime temperatures influence aphid predators in controlled-environment strawberry production.

Her research highlighted an important consideration: selecting the right beneficial insect is only part of the equation.

Environmental conditions, including lighting, temperature and humidity, can influence predator activity, feeding and development.
Understanding these relationships allows growers to make better decisions when introducing and maintaining beneficial organisms in changing production environments.

Finding the Balance Between Chemistry and Biology
Another important discussion focused on balancing pesticide applications with established biological control programs.

A presentation by Azimove Sulthana of Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada and the University of Windsor addressed insecticide efficacy and compatibility with beneficial organisms in greenhouse pepper production.

When pest populations increase, growers may need additional intervention. However, pesticide applications can also affect beneficial insects and predatory mites already working in the crop.

Choosing selective products, understanding their effects on beneficial organisms and communicating with IPM advisors are important steps in maintaining an effective biological program.

At Natural Insect Control, we are excited to see the continued advancement of biological pest management and remain committed to helping growers explore effective, practical biological control solutions.

The future of greenhouse pest management is integrated, informed and increasingly biological.