

The New Pest on the Block – The Allium Leaf Miner

The Allium Leaf Miner (ALM) was first noticed in Poland in 1858, but it's only in recent times that it has become a significant pest. This is possibly a result of climate change providing more hospitable conditions for it to live.

The ALM has fast become a serious pest affecting all the Alliums – the Onion family. The main problem is with Leeks, but it will go for Onions, Garlic, Chives and Shallots as well.

The ALM was first noticed as a problem in Hungary in 1986, but by 2002/3 it had spread to Switzerland, France and Britain. It is also now in the USA and spreading fast.

What is an Allium Leaf Miner?

The adult is a very small fly that lays eggs which hatch into maggots. When fully developed, the maggots pupate and are reddish brown in colour and about 4mm long. They are found near the surface of the host plant inside the leaf tissues. The fly hatches from these and starts the cycle again. There are two cycles a year, the first from March to April and the second from September to November.

Controlling ALM

The only practical control is to cover your crop with fine netting like Veggiemesh from the end of February to the beginning of May and then again at the end of August to the beginning of December. The other thing to do is to rotate where you grow your alliums from season to season as the pupae can live in the soil until they hatch out later in the year.

How do I know if my leeks or onions have been infected?

First, the distinctive track marks will mean that the eggs are being laid. Then you might notice that the leaves are falling over or have gone curly. You might be able to find maggots inside the vertical tunnels or small brown pupae at the base of the tunnels near the surface, but inside the plant. At this stage it might be best to pull up the plant and get rid of it. Do not put in your compost though as it will still be able to hatch and spread the infection.



Here you can see on the left the curly leaves of an Onion and on the right the tracks the maggots have made with the brown patches being the pupae under the leaves.

Veggiemesh supplier; https://www.gardening-naturally.com/?utm_campaign=59871&utm_medium=Affiliate&utm_source=PaidOnResults&porc=DvbhAofwGdBbEHjbsbnspcnicnzgxb