

# PREDATORY MITES



**USE:** Predatory mites are adult mites that seek out and kill pest mites, particularly the common spider mite. Spider mites typically feed on the underside of leaves of indoor plants and trees. Predatory mites will also attack thrips.



**RELEASE:** The predatory mites are shipped as adults in bottles with a medium such as corn grit or vermiculite. They should be released in the evening of the same day received. Keep them in a cool location until release. See other side for detailed release instructions.

**LIFE CYCLE:** The adult female lays 50 to 60 eggs which will hatch into larvae and become adults. The entire cycle takes about 10 days, twice as fast as pest mites.

**RECOMMENDATIONS:** Predatory mites should be released at the FIRST SIGN of pest mites since it takes them a while to establish control. If large populations of pest mites already exist, knock them down with insecticidal soap. High humidity and a little sugar water will improve the predatory mites performance, but do not hose down leaves after releasing. Since they attack each other, do not wait long to release them.

**COVERAGE:** About 2 to 5 predatory mites per infested plant and 500 to 2,000 per tree.



**GENERAL INFORMATION:** Predatory mites are small but can usually be seen with normal vision. Put some on white paper under a good light to see them better. They can be distinguished from pest mites because they have pear shaped bodies, their front legs are longer, and they do not have spots on either side of their body. Their technical name is Neoseiulus californicus and they range in color from pale salmon in immature stages to orange as adults.

**PREDATORY MITE RELEASE INSTRUCTIONS:** If possible release the Predatory Mites in the evening of the same day received. If the cold-pack is still cold, leave the bottle out on a counter for about an hour to allow the mites to warm up to room temperature. If the mites need to be kept overnight, put the cold-pack in the refrigerator (not freezer) for a couple of hours. Remove it, wrap it in a little paper, then put both the mites and the cold-pack back in the shipping container and leave in a cool place over night.

1. If possible, mist the leaves of the plants in the area to be treated. This will give them a drink of water and help them stick to the leaves when released.
2. Tumble the vial to mix the mites into the medium. Remove the cap and sprinkle the contents on the affected plants. It's okay if some fall to the ground, they will crawl back up. You may even sprinkle some around the base of the plant. Leave the empty bottle out in case there are still some eggs in it.

#### RELEASING INDOORS UNDER LIGHTS:

1. Follow the directions above, including misting the plants.
2. Turn off as many lights as possible.
3. When applying the mites, hold a piece of paper under the leaf to catch material that falls.
4. You can also fasten (staple) paper cups to stems and put some of the mites in the cups so they can crawl up and out.
5. The predators will usually head for the bottom of the leaves where they are most likely to find pest mites.
6. After about an hour turn the lights back on.

Now that you've learned more about predatory mites, it's time to add these wonderful insects to your garden. Like all beneficial insects, you can be sure that they'll dine only on your garden's pests and won't harm the good bugs or your plants.