IX. WEEDS AND ALGAE

Weeds in and around the greenhouse serve as hosts for whiteflies, mites, aphids, and thrips, and as reservoirs for tospoviruses. Algae serves as food for shoreflies. Weeds or weed seeds can be introduced into greenhouses in plant material or on tools, equipment, or people. Seeds can blow in through vents or other openings, and some perennial weeds can grow under a greenhouse foundation from the exterior. Even crop seeds or plugs that are dropped on a greenhouse floor can become weeds.

Monitoring

With each scouting visit, inspect greenhouse interiors for weeds and algae. Checking both of these sources for insects at the same time will help you locate insect reservoirs. Be sure to record these observations on a scouting form (see appendix). Small numbers of weeds should be pulled by hand as you scout. Inspect the exterior several times during the growing season to catch developing weed problems while they are minor. A winter inspection of greenhouse exteriors when there is no snow cover can give you an idea of the size of the previous summer's weed population (based on the number of dead weeds).

Weed Management

Greenhouse interior

- Use concrete floors or weed barrier fabric to prevent weed growth on floors.
- Use sterilized soil.

- To remove weed seeds, clean tools or equipment that have been outside.
- Pull new weeds by hand as soon as they are observed.
- Use herbicides labeled for greenhouse interiors.

Greenhouse exterior

- Control weeds with herbicides or by mowing. Close greenhouses vents during application to prevent drift into a greenhouse.
- Maintain a weed-free barrier around a greenhouse by removing all weeds and installing a weed barrier fabric covered by gravel.

Algae Management

- Eliminate excess moisture and plant debris, which favor algal growth.
- Thoroughly remove algae between crops. Clean floors, walls, and benches. A power washer (high-pressure nozzle) can be helpful.
- Use registered algicides.