Biological Control Agents Of Insect Pests On Potatoes

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The importance of natural enemies as control agents of insect pest has been recognized for several decades. Research has involved studying both native and exotic species to determine their efficacy as bio-control agents. The potato crop is plagued with several insect pests, the Colorado potato beetle and aphids being of major concern because of their potential to cause yield reduction and economic loss. Research has revealed certain natural enemies and disease agents that are conducive for use as augmentative bio-control through periodic releases. Natural enemies such as the *Perillus bioculatus, Podisus maculiventris*, several Coccinellid beetles, Carabid beetles, Aphid parasitoids, Tachinid flies, and certain disease organisms such as Nematodes, *Beauveria bassiana*, and *Bacillus thuringiensis tenebrionis*, effectively control these pests however, the correct release rate and timing are essential for these organisms to be successful. The challenge with bio-control organisms lies in mass-producing these agents for purchase and release by growers. Further research into augmenting natural populations already present within the field is needed.

Key Words: Natural enemies, Insects, Nematodes, Bacteria, Fungi

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