



## NEWS RELEASE

### Fruit Focus 2013: FresaProtect and BerryProtect natural aphid control systems now available with innovative release device

East Malling, 23 July 2013 – Viridaxis, a Belgian producer of biological pest control solutions for protected crops, has launched an innovative release device for its FresaProtect and BerryProtect natural aphid control systems, which the company is showcasing at Fruit Focus 2013 (Stand n° 42). These systems come as tubes of parasitoids that are protected by a new handy release device, offering soft fruit growers an easy, effective and sustainable solution for aphid control.



Already available for several years in Europe, FresaProtect (for strawberries) and BerryProtect (for raspberries, currants, blackberries and blueberries) are now even easier to use thanks to this unique release device. What this means is that these simple parasitoid-filled tubes, each of which can protect 200m<sup>2</sup> of crops, now come with a protective system of their own. Hung by a fine nylon string, the roof of this device protects the tubes from direct sunlight and water sprays, while the nylon string prevents ants from entering the tubes and carrying away the contents. This is critical to allow the beneficial insects to complete their cycle of reproducing and killing aphids, to effectively protect the crop.

These innovative products are designed for soft fruit growers who want to reduce the use of pesticides and meet consumer demand for more environmentally friendly products. As Viola Rosemeyer, Viridaxis Strategy and Sales Manager, explained, *"These trends are encouraging producers to opt for integrated pest management strategies, which combine different pest control methods – biological, physical and, as a last resort, chemical. FresaProtect and BerryProtect are solutions specifically designed to meet their needs."*

### Building on natural mechanisms



FresaProtect and BerryProtect use a simple natural mechanism involving aphid parasitism by certain types of mini-wasps that are harmless to humans. The female wasps in the XxxProtect mix lay fertilized eggs inside the aphids (one per aphid). Each growing larva gradually kills its host and makes a cocoon inside in order to pupate. As Viola Rosemeyer explained, *"After about 10 days, an adult emerges from the dead aphid. That adult then sets off in search of more aphids to parasitize so that it can reproduce. The effectiveness of this solution lies in the prolific reproduction of the species in each tube of XxxProtect. For example, one Aphidius colemani female can lay up to 500 eggs throughout its adult life."* These beneficial insects are known as parasitoids because they live on aphids as parasites, unlike ladybirds and lacewings that use aphids as a food source.

## A powerful partner for growers

FresaProtect and BerryProtect offer growers a mix of parasitoid species (five for BerryProtect or six for FresaProtect) to control the most common aphids in integrated or organic soft fruit production, such as the potato aphid (*Macrosiphum euphorbiae*), the pelargonium aphid (*Acyrtosiphon malvae*) and the large raspberry aphid (*Amphorophora idaei*). XxxProtect is very easy to use: growers simply place the tubes in their crops (one tube per 200 m<sup>2</sup>) and then open them to start the natural pest control process. As Nicolas Dassonville, Viridaxis Product Performance Specialist, explained, "The tubes are ready to use and no special training or precautions are necessary. For guaranteed effectiveness, the tubes must simply be put in place right at the beginning of the growing cycle before aphids appear, and should be renewed every three weeks."

## Proven effectiveness

After the development phase, efficacy confirmation trials with FresaProtect and BerryProtect were conducted by a number of growers throughout Europe in different production systems (plain soil and hydroponics, heated glasshouses and unheated tunnels). These trials, conducted in cooperation with different research institutions from 2010, produced very good results and the XxxProtect system has been rapidly adopted by growers. When used preventively, FresaProtect and BerryProtect control the most common aphid species on soft fruit crops and allow growers to use considerably fewer insecticides. One strawberry grower from the Canterbury area said, "I tried FresaProtect in 2013 in my June bearers and I was very pleased with how effective it was. The attack from the red potato aphid (red form of *Macrosiphum euphorbiae*) was perfectly controlled and many mummified aphids (*Praon volucre* and *Aphidius* sp.) were observed on the crop. I was really impressed by this product and it's so easy to use. I will certainly carry on using this product next year."

## From academic research to integrated and biological crop protection

Viridaxis also markets similar solutions for other types of crops: VerdaProtect for greenhouse vegetables (peppers, aubergines and cucumbers), BasilProtect for aromatic herbs and OrnaProtect for ornamental plants. These solutions are available in the United Kingdom from specialized beneficial and pollinating insect distributors.

## About Viridaxis

Located near Charleroi in Belgium, Viridaxis specializes in producing and marketing integrated biological protection solutions for protected crops (strawberries, berry plants, vegetables, aromatic herbs and ornamental plants). Founded in 2004 as a university research spin-off, Viridaxis is now a world leader in its field, with a particularly strong research and development activity, which focuses on continually refining existing solutions and developing new plant protection solutions. The company markets its products through distributors in Europe (Belgium, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Netherlands, Spain, United Kingdom) and Morocco. For further information please visit [www.viridaxis.com](http://www.viridaxis.com).

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**Please visit Viridaxis at Fruit  
Focus 2013 on Stand 42!**

## Pictures



Photo 1: A release device for FresaProtect in tunnel

This HD image can be downloaded from:

<https://dl.dropboxusercontent.com/u/41031343/Viridaxis/photo1.jpg>

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Photo 2: A release device for FresaProtect in greenhouse

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Photo 3: Mummified aphids on a strawberry leaf.

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Photo 4: Female mini-wasps lay their fertilized eggs right inside the aphids.

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<https://dl.dropboxusercontent.com/u/41031343/Viridaxis/photo4.jpg>

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