

Some Critical Questions to Consider While Scouting Greenhouse Ornamentals

Cheryl Frank Sullivan
University of Vermont
Email: cfrank@uvm.edu

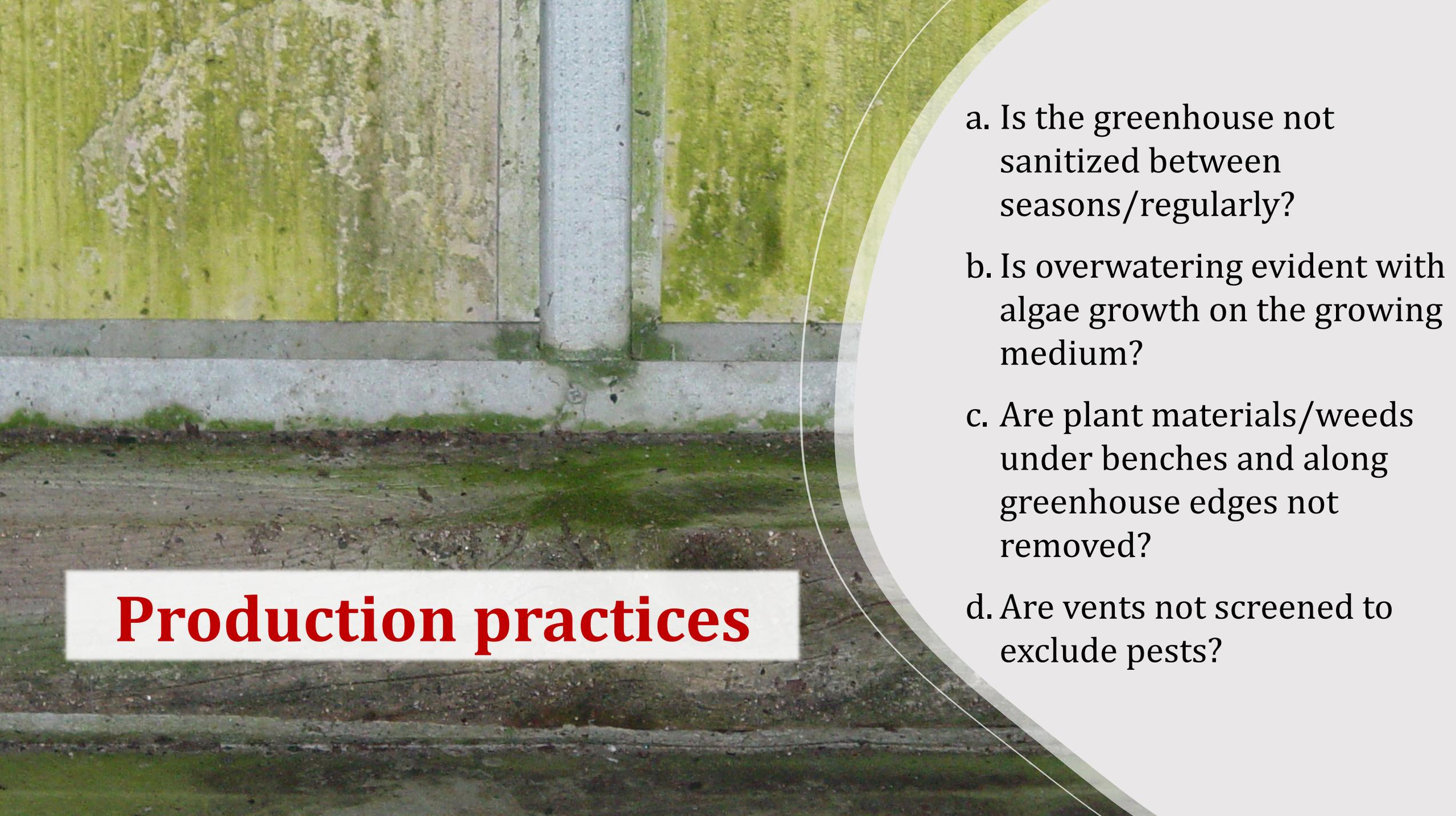
Greenhouse Scout School
Session 3: February 5, 2026



Basic scouting & Data collection

- a. Are sticky cards and plants regularly checked?
- b. Are incoming plant shipments inspected for pests when they first arrived?
- c. What pests are infesting the crop?
- d. What specific crops are infested?
- e. How many pests are present per plant?
- f. How much of the crop is infested in each greenhouse (%)?
- g. Are biocontrol agents present (i.e., mummies, larvae, etc.)?
- h. What are the ratios of pests/natural enemies on plants?
- i. Are the areas that are infested marked/flagged to monitor over time?
- j. Are pests/natural enemies increasing/decreasing on cards/plants over time?
- k. Do employees know how to identify pests?



The background image shows the interior of a greenhouse. A concrete pillar stands in the center, with a concrete base. The walls are covered in a thick layer of green algae or mold. The floor is also covered in a layer of green growth, with some dark debris and weeds visible. A white curved shape on the right side of the image contains a list of questions.

Production practices

- a. Is the greenhouse not sanitized between seasons/regularly?
- b. Is overwatering evident with algae growth on the growing medium?
- c. Are plant materials/weeds under benches and along greenhouse edges not removed?
- d. Are vents not screened to exclude pests?

Relating to natural enemy and/or chemical pesticide use

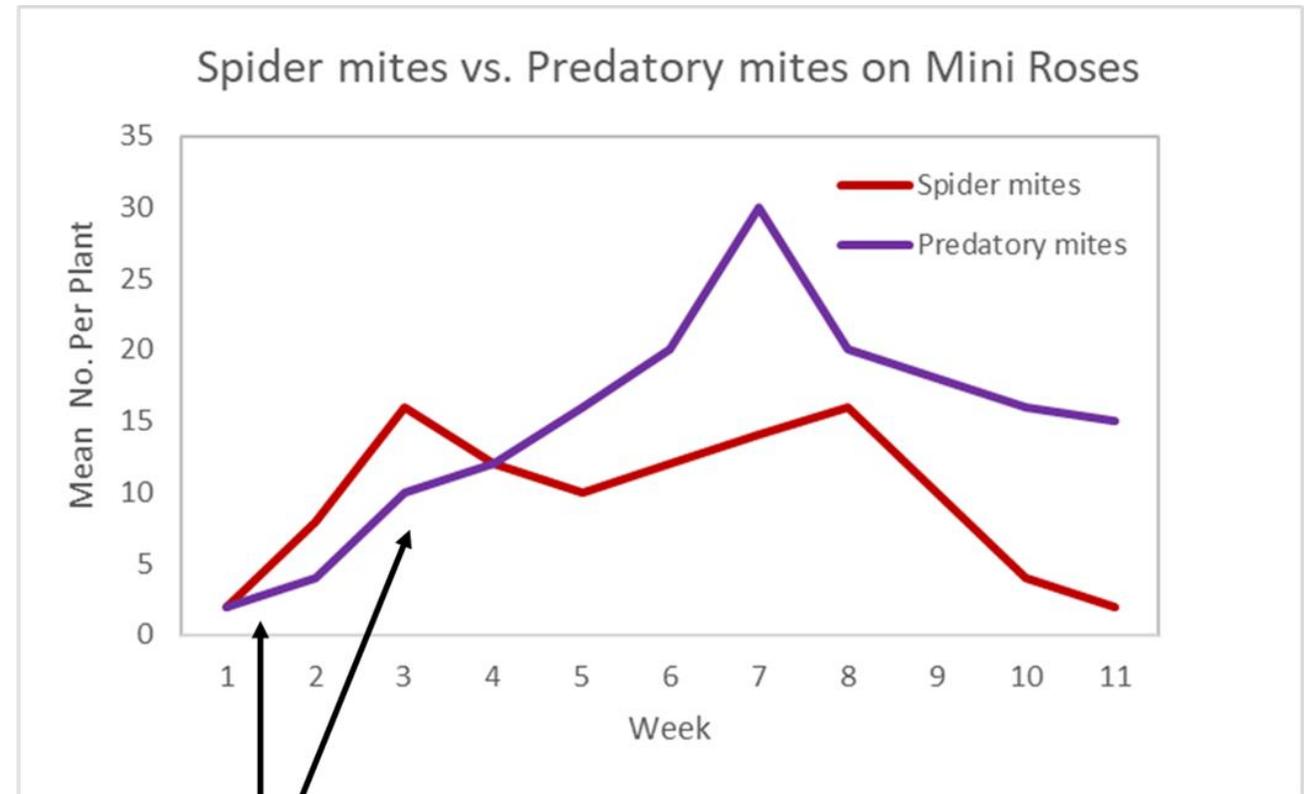
- a. Are pest levels too high for biocontrol or does it need knockdown with a pesticide?
- b. Were the right products for the pests used (were label/biocontrol release guidelines read)?
- c. Are products used during the right life stage of the pest's life cycle?
- d. Are natural enemies used at the right time of year?
- e. Are the right rates for the level of pests per plant, number of plants infested, and greenhouse size used?
- f. Was the quality of the biocontrol agents assessed prior to release?
- g. Is follow-up scouting on the management action carried out to determine efficacy?



BIOLOGICAL
INSECTS AT WORK
TO HELP KEEP
OUR PLANTS
PEST FREE
WITHOUT SPRAYS!

Record keeping

- How did the previous management strategies work (current and past year's)?
- At what time of year and on what plants do the pest problems routinely occur?
- What was done to manage the pests (or not)?
- What were the pest (and biocontrol) levels on the specific crops at time of management?



Predators released preventatively



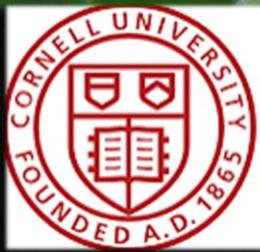
Planning ahead



- a. Is a management plan outlined?
- b. If management last season didn't work, what could the reasons be (Were pest numbers too high for biocontrol; Were treatments made at the wrong life stage; Was the wrong rate applied)?
- c. Was professional consultation sought (i.e., biocontrol suppliers, pesticide reps, Univ. Extension)?

© All photos in this presentation by Cheryl Frank Sullivan, UVM.

Thank You!



Cornell University



© February 2026; Univ. of Vermont Entomology Research Laboratory.

This work is supported by the National Institute of Food & Agric., U.S. Dept. of Agric., through the Northeast Sustainable Agric. Research & Education program under subaward number ONE22-419), UVM Extension and College of Agriculture and Life Sciences.

Any opinions, findings, conclusions, recommendations, use of tradenames and corporations expressed herein are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the view of or an endorsement by the sponsors or institutions. Images are subject to copyright and are used herein with permissions. For educational purposes only. Not for reproduction without permission from the author(s).

