



BRIGIT

Vector Borne Disease of Plants

What insect is inside that spittle?

FACTS:

- The 'spittle' or foam that is seen in spring on many sorts of plants is produced by the immature or juvenile stages (usually referred to as nymphs) of spittlebugs, often known as froghoppers or cuckoo-spit insects.
- These insects, both as nymphs and adult insects, feed by sucking liquid sap out of the plants.
- The nymphs produce the spittle by blowing air into the fluid (excess plant sap) that they excrete.
- After about a month, the nymph moults into an adult insect that leaves the spittle and can hop and fly.
- There are ten species of these spittlebugs in Britain.



How can I tell what species of spittlebug it is?

It is usually straightforward to place a spittlebug nymph into one of the three groups (or genera) below, but deciding which species it belongs to may not always be possible.

If you gently tease the nymph out of its spittle mass (this won't harm it), you need to see whether or not it has any dark markings on its body.

If it is pale yellow or lime green with no dark markings and is feeding on herbaceous plants, it is the Meadow Spittlebug, *Philaenus spumarius*.



If it has a dark band across its body behind the head (the thorax) and is feeding on grasses, sedges or rushes, it is one of the *Neophilaenus* species.



If the front half of its body is mostly dark/black (i.e. the head and thorax) and is feeding on trees or other woody plants, it is one of the *Aphrophora* species.



Once you have decided which of these your spittlebug is, don't forget to report it via our website: <https://www.spittlebugsurvey.co.uk/how-to-survey-for-xylem-feeding-ins>