CLAIMS

1. A method for decreasing the fitness of an insect of the order Hemiptera, the method comprising delivering to the insect an effective amount of a polynucleotide comprising a dsRNA that decreases expression of an insect bacteriocyte regulatory gene or an insect immunoregulatory gene in the insect relative to an insect that has not been administered the dsRNA, wherein the gene encodes a protein selected from the group consisting of a protein from the bacteriocyte-specific cysteine rich proteins BCR family, a protein from the secreted proteins SP family, BicD (Protein bicaudal D), Cact (cactus), DIF (Dorsal related immunity factor), Toll (Toll Interacting Protein), and imd (immune deficiency protein).

2. The method of claim 1, wherein the gene encodes a protein listed in Table 5, Table 8, or Table 9.

3. The method of claim 1 or 2, wherein the dsRNA is complementary to 10 to 30 nucleotides of the gene in the insect.

4. The method of any one of claims 1-3, wherein the method is effective to inhibit expression of the gene in the insect.

5. The method of any one of claims 1-4, wherein the method is effective to decrease the level, diversity, or metabolism of one or more microorganisms resident in the insect relative to an insect that has not been delivered the agent.

6. The method of claim 5, wherein the one or more microorganisms is a *Buchnera* spp.

7. The method of any one of claims 1-6, wherein the polynucleotide is delivered in a composition formulated for delivery to insects.

8. The method of any one of claims 1-7, wherein the delivery comprises delivering the polynucleotide to at least one habitat where the insect pest grows, lives, reproduces, feeds, or infests.

9. The method of any one of claims 1-8, wherein the delivery comprises spraying the polynucleotide on an agricultural crop.

10. The method of any one of claims 1-9, wherein the polynucleotide is delivered as an insect comestible composition for ingestion by the insect.

11. The method of any one of claims 1-10, wherein the polynucleotide is formulated with an agriculturally acceptable carrier as a liquid, a solid, an aerosol, a paste, a gel, or a gas composition.

12. The method of any one of claims 1-11, wherein the insect is an aphid.

13. A composition comprising a polynucleotide comprising a dsRNA formulated for delivery to an insect of the order Hemiptera, wherein the dsRNA is complementary to 15 to 30 nucleotides of an insect bacteriocyte regulatory gene or an insect immunoregulatory gene, wherein the gene encodes a protein selected from the group consisting of a protein from the bacteriocyte-specific cysteine rich proteins BCR family, a protein from the secreted proteins SP family, BicD (Protein bicaudal D), Cact (cactus), DIF (Dorsal related immunity factor), Toll (Toll Interacting Protein), and imd (immune deficiency protein).

14. The composition of claim 13, wherein the gene encodes a protein listed in Table 5, Table 8, or Table 9.

15. A plant comprising a topical application of the composition of claim 13 or 14.

16. A transgenic plant cell having in its genome a recombinant DNA construct, wherein the recombinant DNA construct comprises a heterologous promoter operably linked to a DNA encoding a RNA comprising at least one double-stranded RNA region, at least one strand of which comprises a nucleotide sequence that is complementary to 15 to 30 nucleotides of an insect bacteriocyte regulatory gene or an insect immunoregulatory gene, wherein the insect is of the order Hemiptera and wherein the gene encodes a protein selected from the group consisting of a protein from the bacteriocyte-specific cysteine rich proteins BCR family, a protein from the secreted proteins SP family, BicD (Protein bicaudal D), Cact (cactus), DIF (Dorsal related immunity factor), Toll (Toll Interacting Protein), and imd (immune deficiency protein).

17. The transgenic plant of claim 16, wherein the gene encodes a protein listed in Table 5, Table 8, or Table 9.

18. The method of claim 1, wherein the gene is a Bcr1 gene, a Bcr4 gene, an ApGLNT1 gene, or a Cact gene.

19. The method of claim 18, where the dsRNA is delivered as a PNA.