

Kansas Insect Newsletter

For Agribusinesses, Applicators, Consultants and Extension Personnel



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October 1, 2010 No. 27

Autumn Home Invaders

We are starting to see, and get reports about, some of the annual household invaders. These include crickets, boxelder bugs, millipedes, and especially the multicolored Asian lady beetle. They typically try to invade homes this time of year looking for a shelter to survive the winter. These pests are really just a nuisance and pose no threat to health or property but when significant numbers build up they can be a serious nuisance.

The best way to protect your dwelling from these pests is to limit access by eliminating, or at least reducing, the points of entry. Ensure that all screens are tight fitting and intact. Make sure the caulk around windows and door frames are in good condition. Remove excess foliage and mulch from around the foundation.

Insecticides can also be effective if you treat the exterior foundation and some of the area around the outside of the building. This often reduces the number of potential household invaders. Once inside, sometimes hand-picking or vacuuming is enough to eliminate the problem. Glue boards can also be helpful to trap the invaders. However, if significant numbers do succeed in entering, an insecticide application inside the home may be required. Aerosol sprays may work to give a quick knock down but have short lasting effects. Insecticides with longer lasting effects that can be sprayed along baseboards, in cracks, crevices, and other hidings places, and often work quite well. Always check the pesticide label to make sure the product you select is effective against the target pest and has no unwanted side effects, i.e. does not stain, leave unsightly residues, etc.



Multicolored Asian Lady Beetles

These insects deserve a little more explanation as they are considered “beneficial” insects during the growing season. However, they can be serious nuisances for the next month as they aggregate for overwintering. These beetles were first imported into the US by the USDA in the late 70s and early 80s to help with aphid control. They are very efficient aphid predators and since they have biting/chewing mouthparts they can also deliver an irritating bite to people. If enough beetles congregate inside a home they can also cause a small odor problem, may stain certain substrates when smashed, and occasionally cause an allergic reaction in some folks. If there are significant numbers of beetles in your area this fall it probably means that aphids were plentiful in nearby crops and other plants this past summer. These beetles are primarily attracted to the south- and west-facing sides of structures because they radiate/reflect the most heat.

Jeff Whitworth

Holly Davis

False Chinch Bug Nymphs Worry Homeowners

This late summer and early fall the diagnostic lab has seen an abundance of false chinch bugs, *Nysius raphanus* from lawns and coming into homes. Although the sheer number of them can alarm homeowners, these bugs are harmless. They do not bite, sting, or infest households. These bugs have been around all summer, feeding on wild plants in the mustard family, but now that the vegetation they have been feeding on is drying down, they are on the move, searching for more succulent food source. This often ends up being lawns and gardens. The nymph’s wings are not fully developed; therefore they have to migrate to more favorable habitats by walking. They tend to cluster together in large groups. While heavy feeding may cause small amounts of yellowing or general wilting of the plant, healthy plants can typically withstand considerable feeding pressure and pesticides are rarely needed.



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The Dark Flower Scarab Common This Year

Over the past month, the Insect Diagnostic lab has seen numerous reports of the dark flower scarab, *Euphoria sepulcralis*, feeding near plant and tree wounds, and even hanging around compost piles and garbage cans. This beetle is often mistaken for the Japanese beetle, but is not typically considered a harmful species in Kansas. The grubs can be found beneath dead sod or manure and the adults have been reported to feed on tree sap, many ripening fruits, and the pollen of numerous flowers. The adult beetle is about 10-14mm long, bronze to metallic green, and has characteristic cream markings that have been described as U's or W's on the elytra.



Holly Davis

Report from the Kansas State University Insect Diagnostic Laboratory:

The following samples were submitted to the Insect Diagnostic Laboratory from September 17th to September 30th.

- September 17 2010 – Geary County – Green scarab, *Euphoria sepulcralis*, around home
- September 17 2010 – Riley County – Broad-faced sac spider, *Trachelas tranquillus*, around home
- September 17 2010 – Clay County – Larder beetles in home
- September 17 2010 – Atchison County – Midge flies around home
- September 17 2010 – Scott County – Pyralid caterpillars in tree
- September 20 2010 – Atchison County – Fly maggots in basement
- September 20 2010 – Jefferson County – Mole cricket in commercial building
- September 20 2010 – Sherman County – Spider mites on plant
- September 20 2010 – Leavenworth County – Spider mite damage and webworms on Rosemary and oregano

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September 21 2010 – Riley County – Brown dog ticks in home
September 21 2010 – Riley County – Hairy fungus beetle in home
September 21 2010 – Johnson County – Springtails in home
September 21 2010 – Wabaunsee County – Masked chafer grubs in lawn
September 23 2010 – Riley County – Earwig in home
September 27 2010 – Nemaha County – Phorid flies in home
September 27 2010 – Riley County – Drain flies in home
September 28 2010 – Leavenworth County – Fall armyworm in Brome
September 28 2010 – Wallace County – Paper wasp, *Polistes* sp. around home
September 29 2010 – Miami County – Virginiacreeper sphinx caterpillars on grapes
September 29 2010 – Trego County – False chinch bugs in lawn and home
September 29 2010 – Sherman County – False chinch bugs in lawn and home
September 29 2010 – Jackson County – Eastern yellowjacket around home
September 29 2010 – Douglas County – Sawtoothed grain beetle in apartment
September 30 2010 – Barton County – Spider mite and leafhopper damage on grapes

If there are any questions regarding these samples or about the identification of any arthropod please contact the Insect Diagnostician at (785) 532-4739 or GotBugs@ksu.edu.

Holly Davis

Sincerely,

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