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Kansas Insect Newsletter

For Agribusinesses, Applicators, Consultants, and Extension Personnel

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April 13, 2007 No. 7

No change in Accumulated GDD's....

Given the recent cold spell, there were no additional GDD's recorded for any of the 20 reporting sites in Kansas.

Effect of the recent cold spell ...

Eastern tent caterpillars withstood record frigid temperatures documented during the April 2 – 5 cold spell as determined by inspections of 20 randomly-selected web masses. In only one instance was there evidence of mortality. Limp (apparently lifeless) larvae were collected and brought indoors but failed to revive. Caterpillars survived in the other tents under observation. They frequently clustered outside of tents where they basked in the sun. Due to low temperatures retarding leaf development, tents are readily visible and can easily be removed.



Dead eastern tent caterpillars



Eastern tent caterpillars -
Alive and well



Highly visible "tents"

The only observed mortality for **European pine sawfly** was for delicate larvae that had hatched immediately before the onset of frigid temperatures. More hardy established larvae appeared unfazed, and (currently) continue feeding during the day. Larvae move/cluster/survive at the bases of needles during periods of low night-time temperatures.



European pine Sawfly larvae

A spruce mite damaged sample was received in the insect diagnostic lab. While most mites are considered “warm weather” pests, the initiation of spruce spider mite activities occurs during the 100-200 accumulated GDD parameters characterizing eastern tent caterpillars and European pine sawfly activities. Thus, the submitted sample was not unusual or out-of-the-ordinary. People with spruce in landscape settings should inspect trees for discolored branches and needles. Shake a suspicious looking branch over a light piece of paper and look for the movement of tiny dark specks ---- spruce spider mites. Treatments are warranted to prevent additional progressive damage attributed to ensuing springtime generations of spruce spider mite. Homeowner products containing the active ingredients acephate, bifenthrin, malathion and permethrin can be used to control spruce spider mites/”spider mites”. Check specific product labels to ensure their legal use for the intended pests and specific treatment sites.

Bob Bauernfeind

Alfalfa Weevil

It is important to scout your alfalfa fields after the return of milder conditions. Some weevils have and will survive through this period of cold, wet weather. The larvae that survived and the ones to be concerned about, are those that feed on the buds and new growth coming from the crown of the plant. If weevils are feeding on this re-growth they can slow the plant’s recovery. The old top growth, that has been injured or killed by the freeze, will prevent insecticides from contacting these weevils. If the plants are drooping over, this dead foliage should be removed and then the field scouted to determine weevil populations, prior to application.

Jeff Whitworth

LOUSY HORSES!!

Three species of lice, one blood-sucking and two chewing, infest horses. Horse sucking lice are about one-eighth inch (3 mm) long, a dirty gray color, and are characterized by broader abdomen, narrow thorax and slender head. Because of their piercing-sucking mouthparts, these lice can inflict more serious damage than the chewing lice, especially if populations are left unchecked. Sucking lice, when in large numbers, can cause the host to become anemic, have reduced weight gain, and to rub off patches of hair in frantic efforts to relieve the itching. Horse chewing lice are about one-tenth inch (2.5 mm) long, chestnut brown except for the abdomen which is yellow with dark cross bands. They are

very flat with a broad, round head and small legs. They use their chewing mouthparts to feed on dry skin and skin secretions. Both types of horse lice glue their eggs (nits) to the horse's hair. Horse lice infestations are more common during winter months when the horse's long hair coat provides an ideal environment.

As wingless insects, horse lice depend on animal contact to transfer easily among individual horses. Some horses are more susceptible to lice and are known as carriers; these should be inspected routinely and treated when needed. Lice are difficult to be detected by untrained eyes; they can go unnoticed until they are in great numbers in certain body areas or the entire body. Effective grooming and proper diet are important aspects of louse control. Routine inspection of horses during the winter is highly recommended, especially if the horses are kept in loose confinement. A proper diet helps the horse withstand moderate lice infestations without ill effects of blood loss or irritation. Several pyrethroid insecticides in various formulations are available for use on horses. It is necessary to retreat the infested horse in about two weeks to kill the young lice which hatch from eggs not affected by the first chemical treatment.

Alberto Broce

Brand names appearing in this publication are for product identification purposes only. No endorsement is intended, nor is criticism implied of similar products not mentioned.

Sincerely,

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