

WEST
PLAINS
IPM
UPDATE

News about
Integrated Pest
Management in
Hockley,
Cochran, and
Lamb Counties
from
Kerry Siders

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SPECIAL EDITION: Mozena Obtusa Plant Bug

Over the last 24 hours I have received several calls about “a bug” that is being found in extremely high numbers. A majority of these inquiries are coming from the southwest portion of Hockley County particularly near Sundown. So, this “bug” is a true bug known as *Mozena obtusa* Uhler plant bug. If you might recall we dealt with this insect back in August of 2014, mostly out in Cochran County then. The *Mozena* plant bug is in the family Coreidae, which a group of insects given the common name of leaffooted bug.



Immature *Mozena obtusa* plant bug on cotton leaf (Photo by K. Siders).

The common thread from 2014 to 2022 is our drought conditions. A couple other things: this insect's primary host is mesquite, a legume. They feed on the beans. Dr. Pat Porter documented feeding on peas and corn in 2014. I noted them in cotton back in 2014, but not the sheer numbers I am seeing now, and it is a month earlier. Reports from Midland and Odessa area indicate high populations there as well. All of this said, how important is this insect? Honestly in the numbers I have seen in cotton (+20 per cotton plant of the immature) occupying all parts of the plant, I am concerned. As evidence to support this concern is a particular field I scout weekly. Last week square set was perfect at 100% after the first 12 days of squaring. Then this week it dropped to 79%. No other insects, drip cotton, good moisture, no environmental event to point finger at, and yet missing squares not present to dissect to determine possible cause of death.



Various stages of development of the Mozena obtusa plant bug (photo by K. Siders).



Mozena obtusa plant bug on nearby mesquite tree/bush 2022 (photo by K. Siders).

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One thing observed in this example I use is we did not find egg masses. Were these immature plant bugs hatched in this field or did they crawl. Understand, immatures do not have functioning wings yet. They can travel quickly on the ground though. This insect is often treated like a stink bug; however, stink bugs typically do not feed on cotton squares but rather bolls. I would treat them more like a Lygus when they are present in these numbers (+5 per plant). Although not as damaging as a Lygus would be at these numbers. Dr. Suhas Vyavhare did put out an insecticide trial this morning (7/12/22) to see what works best. Typically, a pyrethroid would be considered first, but concern about flaring aphids always enters the picture. I will keep you informed of the results.

Homeowners are calling about this insect as well. The most effective insecticides are the pyrethroid based products. Some examples of pyrethroid active ingredients include: bifenthrin, lambda-cyhalothrin, permethrin, cypermethrin and cyfluthrin. Insecticides, including organic products work best against the nymphal stages so frequent scouting of host plants is recommended to detect early stages of an infestation. When using an insecticide read and follow label directions for safety precautions, rates and preharvest intervals.

If you have questions, feel free to call.



Immature *Mozena obtusa* plant bug.



Adult *Mozena obtusa* plant bug.

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