

**Texas AgriLife Extension
TEXAS PECAN PEST
MANAGEMENT NEWSLETTER**

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#09-4

**This newsletter is being supported by
your TEXAS PECAN GROWERS
ASSOCIATION**

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Anyone wanting this newsletter by email please send me a note at the above address and I'll put you on the list. If anyone has had an address change from a rural route box number to a 911 address please let me know so I can make the change. Also, if you change email servers you will need to let me know. I have had to drop several producers because of returned letters with incorrect/old addresses and returned email notices.

GENERAL

The main concern about the crop right now is the weather. Some portions of the state have received some rain while in other areas, especially the southwest, producers might have to go to the dictionary to look up its definition. Also, there is still a concern in areas that had the April freeze if nutlets produced by secondary buds will stay on the tree. Overall the crop is okay but we still have a long way to go.

INSECTS

Black aphids: I have seen some signs of early season activity but these populations have crashed. For these early populations I have never observed defoliation from this

insect during the early season so I never recommend treatment at this time. My main concern starts around mid July when infestations can cause defoliation. Watch for this insect to build up in the interior canopy of trees or in sections of an orchard with a lot of shading. Look for the characteristic yellow angular blotches on the leaflets.- and the presence of adults and /or immatures. In many cases spot applications can be made to correct the problem.



Note how the yellow necrotic areas end abruptly at a secondary leaf vein. This characteristic sign is a way of separating BPA damage from a physiological problem where the yellowing seems to seep across the secondary veins.

Yellow aphids: The first cycle of yellow (blackmargined) aphids has come and gone in most orchards. Normally I don't recommend treating for YPA and feel the best fix for this problem is a good rain. But in the absence of rain there are several insecticides to choose

from. Insecticides containing Imidacloprid (numerous products), Thiamethoxam (Centric), and Pymetrozine, (Fulfill) which are specific to aphids can be effective. This group of insecticides is specific to sucking type insects – aphids, phylloxera and spittle bugs and should have no affect on beneficial insects. For home use, Bayer Advanced Tree and Shrub Insecticide can be applied to the soil around the base of the tree which would eliminate the problem of foliar applications. Rates are based on inches of trunk circumference.

Walnut caterpillar; No reports of any significant first generation infestations outside of some late May early June activity in residential areas of Cuero. However, this insect has the potential to go from undetectable populations to major outbreaks from one generation to the next. Texas can have two or three generations a year with generations being approximately six weeks apart.

Spittle bugs: I am seeing some spittle masses from the second generation in most orchards. Although feeding can cause some nutlets to drop this insect is generally considered a non economic pest.



Pecan nut casebearer: Second generation PNC was pretty light in most orchards and no treatment was needed. Texas can have 3 to 4 generations per year but it is very difficult to monitor for these later generations.

Scorch mites: No reports of scorch mite activity – yet, but the hot dry conditions are setting up favorable conditions for this pest. Watch for individual leaflet drop with the characteristic bronzing or brown area along the mid-vein of the leaflet.



Pecan leaf scorch mite damage - Univ. of GA

Heavy infestations will require a miticide but some suppression of light infestations can be achieved with dimethoate.

Stink bugs: Here in the Brazos Valley there has been a recent increase in stink bug collections in black light traps over the last week. Some of this activity is probably due to corn harvest and some because immatures have now reached the adult stage and are looking for new food sources. The primary time of concern for this group is later in the season starting around mid August but if your orchard is located next to a row crop that is either being harvested or is drying up, watch the border rows for adults. Feeding by adults prior to shell hardening will cause nutlets to abort. The most effective group of insecticides for stink bugs are the pyrethroids.

Grasshoppers: This is another insect that is favored by hot dry conditions. Grasshoppers are more of a threat to young trees with limited foliage than larger mature trees. Insecticide application areas should include fence rows and border areas as well as the orchard floor and tree canopies. Insecticides such as carbaryl (Sevin) are labeled for grasshoppers and cleared for grazing but I would restrict this product to orchard floor applications only because of the potential aphid out breaks when applied to the foliage.

WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT

Squirrels: As I drive through residential areas I am noticing dead pecan branches with dead foliage attached which is a sign of squirrel activity. Depending on your view of these furry tailed Sciuridae's, these animals can be "cute" or a major pest problem with most commercial producers considering them a problem. For homeowners or producers with only a few trees, exclusion might be the preferred management option. Barriers placed around the trunk to prevent access in addition to pruning back branches from other trees to prevent tree to tree movement can prevent damage for selected trees. I have seen work that shows where electric fences placed between wooded areas and high value crops be effective. Please contact me if you would like more information on the use of these fences.

If hunting is your management choice, Texas game laws vary between counties so check the local games laws to see what is legal for your county

TEXAS PECAN GROWERS CONFERENCE

Once again I will have a booth in the exhibitors area and hope that you will find time to come by and visit. I will be providing CEU's on Monday and Tuesday and as in past years the sign in sheets will be located in the back of the meeting room.

Certificates will be available at the end of each day.

MEETINGS

The following are county field days that I'm aware of at this time.

Texas meetings

August 11, 2009

Comanche County
Pecan weevil field day
Contact: Whit Weems, CEA – Comanche County @ 325-356-2539

August 12, 2009

Williamson County
Pecan weevil field day
Contact Bob Whitney, CEA Williamson County @ 512-943-3300

State Meetings – 2009

July 12 – 15, 2009

Texas Pecan Growers Conference
Mesquite, TX
Contact TPGA @ 979-846-3285

September 18, 2009

Arizona Pecan Growers conference
Palo Verde Holiday Inn
Tucson, AZ
Contact: Mike Kilby @ 520-403-4613

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