

Kansas Insect Newsletter

For Agribusinesses, Applicators, Consultants and Extension Personnel



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May 17, 2013 No. 7

Alfalfa Update

Checked several fields this week that had been treated once for weevils and several fields that had been treated for a second time. All fields had the little cotton-looking weevil pupal cells that had at one time held weevil pupae. But there were very few pupae still present as almost all adults had emerged. Even checked one field that had not been treated-it had by far the most damage, but compared to past years, really not that bad (probably only about 30-40% foliage damage). Fields treated once seemed to all have received pretty good control this year (all the fields I checked in the last 2 weeks had at most a 20% infestation).

Wheat Update

We are still not finding any significant aphid infestations in wheat fields in south central or north central KS. You can find a few aphids in every field (mostly bird cherry oat, but a few greenbugs also) and most fields are starting to head out. There are really very few signs of barley yellow dwarf virus also which makes sense because the aphids have to transmit the disease to the plant and if there are very few aphids there will be little disease.

Jeff Whitworth

Holly Davis

Thrips in Wheat

Sweepnetting in wheat this week I noticed a couple of fields with relatively high populations of thrips. These do not represent a threat to the wheat, but could pose a problem for adjacent summer crops under certain conditions. As the wheat matures, most resident insects will leave the crop – the classic situation is chinch bugs migrating into neighboring sorghum. In the case of the western flower thrips, *Frankliniella occidentalis*, (Fig. 1) the neighboring crop of concern is soybean. If the growth of seedling soybeans is delayed by dry conditions shortly after emergence of the crop, the plants can be susceptible to damage by thrips migrating from the wheat. Thrips have rasping mouthparts that damage individual plant cells, and cumulative damage gives soybean plants a yellowish appearance (Fig. 2). Of course, with adequate soil moisture, healthy plants can quickly outgrow this type of damage, often before it even becomes noticeable. The danger arises when plant growth is impeded by other problems, in which case feeding by large numbers of thrips can serve as the proverbial straw that broke the camel's back, or in this case, the plant's survival. It is very difficult to justify spraying the thrips in these

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situations, because regardless of treatment efficacy, plant recovery will remain dependent on improvement in the conditions limiting growth, usually rainfall.



Figure 1



Figure 2

J.P. Michaud – Hays, KS

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Wet Paint - Do Not Touch

Despite a sign, maybe you and I might be tempted to touch it anyway, just to see if it had dried.

Well caterpillars can't read. Tuesday evening as I was doing some touch-up painting, who comes crawling along? An eastern tent caterpillar. Of course, I knew from where it came ---- my flowering crab just 20-feet to the north. More precisely, I knew the branch from which it came.

Of the active tents, this was the oldest --- the larvae having emerged on March 30. And as mature larvae do, when the time approaches that they will disperse in search of a site to build their cocoons, they cluster on the outside of their tent. Thus the "wanderer" on Tuesday was one of those clustered May 10.



on



Thus it was a 46-day time span from egg hatch to the completion of larval development.

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“Dripping” With European Pine Sawfly Larvae

I similarly have been observing the development of European pine sawfly larva on my favorite Mugo. As with eastern tent caterpillar, their development rapidly escalated with warmer temperatures, and the several past days’ unseasonably warm temperatures pushed them to completion.



On Wednesday, mature sawfly larvae were dispersing in search of sites in which to construct their cocoons. Thus 39 days had elapsed between egg hatch and larva maturity.



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And the Mugo?????? For a second consecutive year, European pine sawfly basically stripped it of its needles.

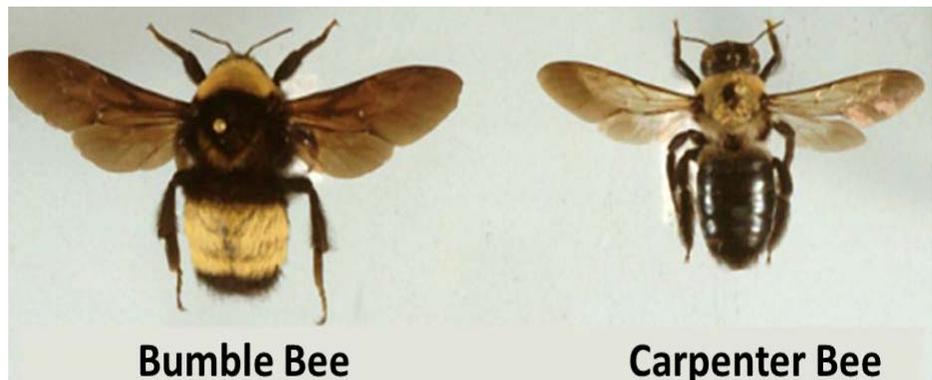


Recall that the Spring of 2012 was abnormally and early-season insect events were estimated to be 3 weeks ahead of schedule. And this year's cool Spring delayed events by a week. This is borne out by one-month differential of the two above images. Also note that candle development in 2012 was in advance of current development.

The "Buzz" Carpenter Bees

Carpenter bees are fascinating insects. And one has to marvel at their flying capabilities as they zoom about in their mating ritual. These antics typically begin in May. I noted carpenter bees (well one carpenter bee) back on April 29 (during a brief warm spell). The cool weather that followed sort of put the bees back on hold. But with our recent warm-up, reports and questions regarding carpenter bees have been received.

People might assume that if it looks like a bumble bee and buzzes like a bumble bee, it is a bumble bee. However, the abdomen of the carpenter bee (being devoid of hairs/fuzz) possesses a shiny in appearance



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At this time of year blue wild indigo (a native herbaceous perennial) abound in areas such as native grasslands, meadows, woodland and stream borders.



and

Carpenter bees are especially attracted to these plants as they forage for nectar. And conveniently, male carpenter bees may mate with foraging females.



The major positive aspect of carpenter bees is their role as pollinators. However, people do not recognize carpenter bees in that role. Rather, carpenter bees are viewed as “threatening” and “destructive”. Male carpenter bees are territorial and will “buzz” a person who encroaches into their zone. While this may scare people, males cannot sting and are therefore completely harmless. Knowing this, a person might delight in staring down a male bee hovering at eye-level (actually kind of comical ---- you may find yourselves talking to Mr. Bee). Female carpenter bees are not aggressive and will not deliver a sting unless provoked or carelessly handled.

There is no doubt that carpenter bees have a destructive side. Carpenter bees will attack a variety of (primarily) bare and/or weathered wooden items such as structural timbers, decks, lawn furniture, fascia surfaces, fence posts, and utility poles.

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Initially, newly constructed tunnels may be of “minor” significance. However, extensive/destructive tunneling may occur if galleries are repeatedly reused and expanded over a number of years. Additionally, pollen deposits and carpenter bee excrement may cause unsightly stains. And deposits of “sawdust” may require cleaning/removal.

Some people will wage campaigns against carpenter bees if they (the carpenter bees) have been reoccurring and plentiful in number. Maintaining and painting exposed wood surfaces will aid in preventing carpenter bee problems. Existing entrance holes can be filled and sealed to discourage carpenter bees from reusing previous galleries. Continued surveillance is a tactic used by some individuals who will swat and kill the slow-flying hovering females as they seek/investigate potential nesting sites. When active galleries are discovered, a wire can be inserted to an attempt to kill developing larvae. Caulking galleries will entrap carpenter bees and their larvae.

Some people may opt for an insecticide approach when coping with carpenter bees. Dust formulations may be wafted through the entrance hole. Active adults will carry the dust deeper into the gallery system. Preventative sprays can be applied to exterior wood surfaces with the intent of killing carpenter bees as they contact treated surfaces. The results may vary depending on the thoroughness of treatment applications and the deterioration rates of the treatments per se. Currently, for 2013, there are there are 231 insecticide products registered (in Kansas) for use against carpenter bees. Visit various local retail outlets and speak with store personnel to determine which product(s) they market for use against carpenter bees.

Depending upon one’s take, carpenter bee gallery excavations can be decorative.



Front side



Backside



Insect Diagnostic Lab Report from May 9 – May 15, 2013

Oriental Cockroach (*Blatta orientalis*) in a retirement housing

Green Peach Aphids (*Myzus persicae*); winged adults around window screen



Green Peach Aphid



From the gotbugs:

And so it happened in Prairie Village, Kansas. These grass structures have been wedged between the house and the shutter after the owner removed the shutter from the house. It is likely a work of the Grass Carrier Wasp *Isodontia mexicana*, also called “The Cricket Carrier”. An abundance of unidentified insect remains was also found underneath the shutter, perhaps victims of the wasp in the habit of carrying everything into its nest. First mentioning of this species in our newsletter appeared on April 18, 2008 under the heading

Do we ever stop learning?..

[<http://entomology.k-state.edu/doc/extension-newsletters/ks-insect-newsletter-24-1.pdf>]

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