

# Kansas Insect Newsletter

For Agribusinesses, Applicators, Consultants and Extension Personnel



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September 14, 2012, No. 24

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## Been Down This Road Before? Déjà vu ---- Tobacco Budworms

Some things never change ----- at our home, we plant begonias and geraniums along the front walkway of our home (Figure 1).



Figure 1

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In 2009, the geraniums were hit hard by tobacco budworm larvae (Figure 2).



**Figure 2**

Not wanting to be victimized in 2010, I set out a pheromone trap (Figure 3A) to detect the presence/arrival of tobacco budworm moths (Figure 3B) from overwintering quarters south of the Kansas border.



**Figure 3**

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Alas, neither hide nor hair (of course entomologists would say, neither exoskeleton or seta) of a moth was seen/trapped. Nor was there any evidence of any tobacco budworm activity in 2011. Thus this year, laxity set in, as (from afar) we enjoyed lush begonia and geranium growth achieved even during this extremely hot season (Figure 4).



**Figure 4**

Obviously you know what's coming next. When getting to do some hand weeding on Monday, I noted some feeding damage and fecal pellets (Figure 5). Tobacco budworms had made a return appearance. But I stopped them in their tracks with a Sevin treatment that evening. And I also set out a pheromone trap in the event that there might be further adult activities yet this season.



Figure 5

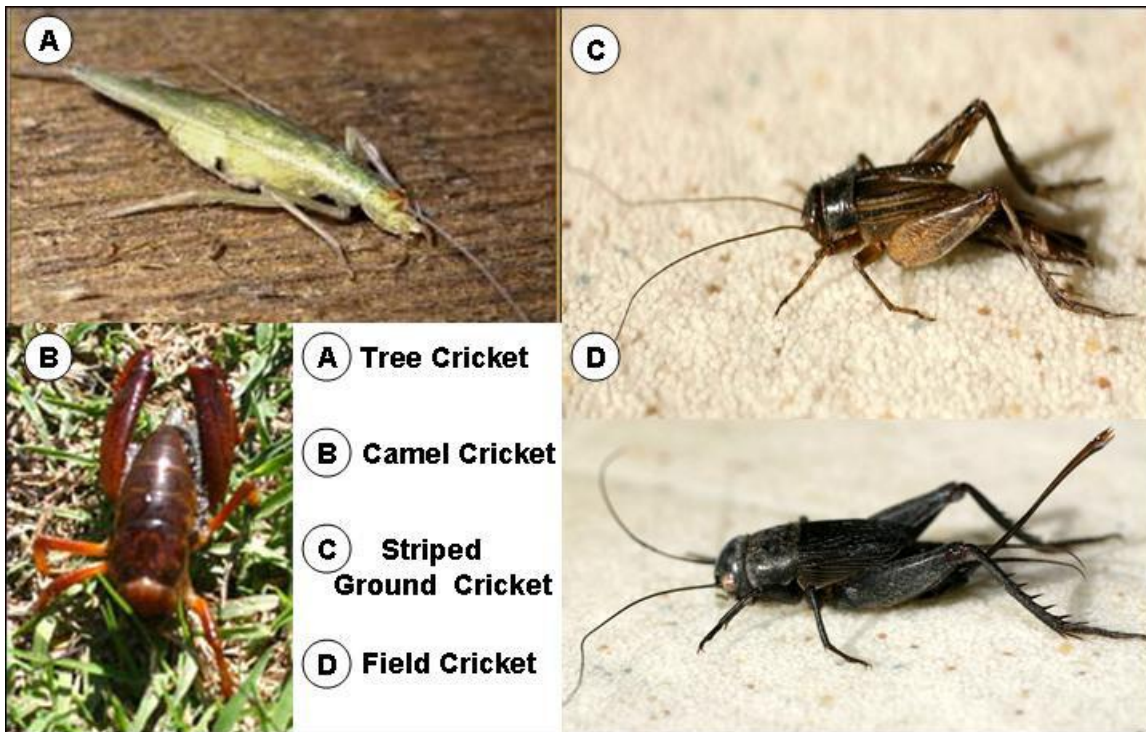
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## Things settle in and run their course ----- Uninvited house guests

How soon we forget (it seems) our recent mild winter followed by our warmer-than-normal spring ----- how at one time we were 3 weeks ahead of schedule, and certain insects initially appeared and subsequently completed their seasonal performances earlier than usual. Despite that, we have settled into the business-as-usual mode. That is, later season insects and their activities are sort of back on track.

As mentioned above, this year's appearance of tobacco budworms mirrored that of 2009. And a rash of cricket inquires last week and this week prompts the following comments on Uninvited House Guests. The crickets in question? Small striped ground crickets in Montgomery county, field crickets in Labette County, camel crickets in Trego County and three samples of (female) snowy tree crickets in Riley County (Figure 6).

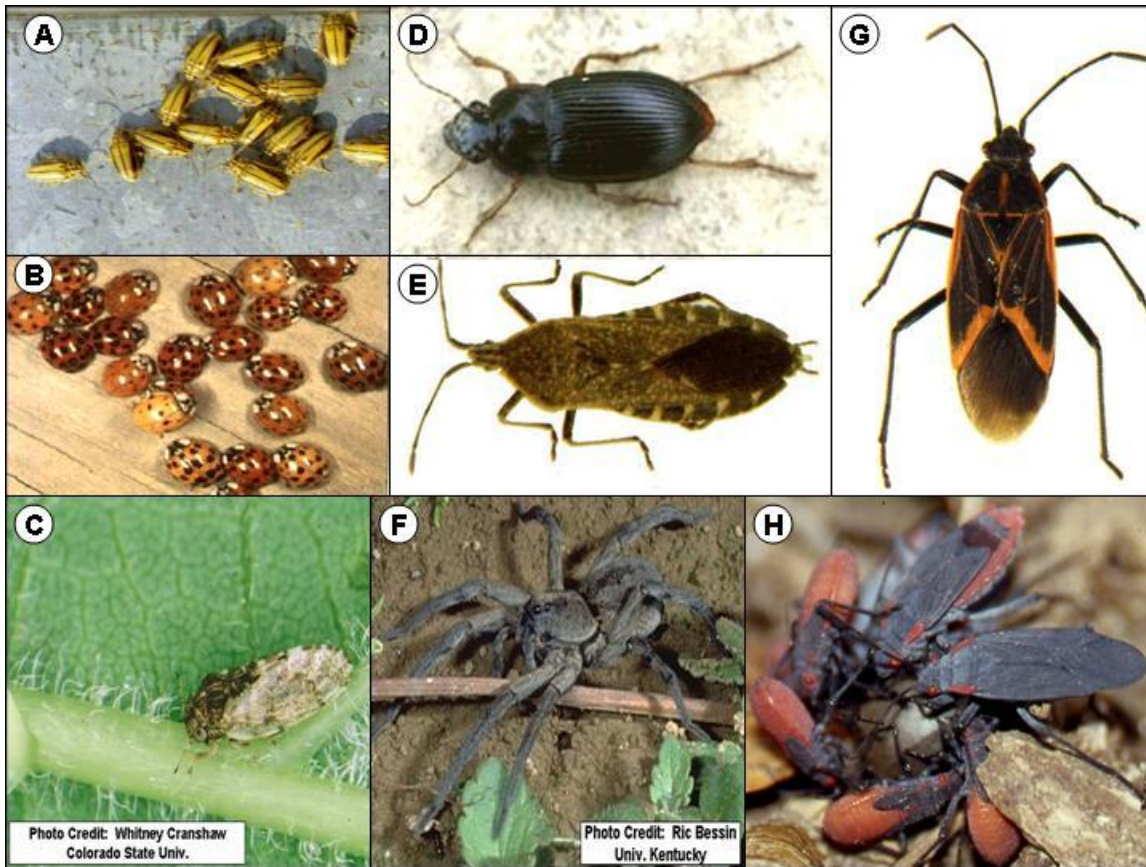


**Figure 6**

Surely soon to follow will be reports of elm leaf beetles, multicolored Asian lady beetles, hackberry nipplegall psyllids, ground beetles, squash bugs, various types of spiders, boxelder bugs and red-shouldered bugs (Figure 7 – A – H, respectively).

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**Figure 7**

With the advent of cooler evening temperatures, insects tend to gravitate towards areas of warmth. They are especially drawn to the south and west side foundations of homes and buildings which are exposed to direct sunlight and therefore have accumulated heat during the daylight hours. Insects and spiders are continually on-the-move and thus seem to find and exploit any crack or crevice which serves as an indoor entryway. While an occasional “house guest” may go unnoticed, or if detected easily disposed of, cries for help are heard when large numbers of interlopers are encountered.

The oft-cited first line of defense is elimination of sources. This generally is impractical. For instance, there may be more benefit to an elm tree, boxelder tree, golden rain tree or hackberry tree than might be the insects associated with them (elm leaf beetles, boxelder bugs, red-shouldered bugs, hackberry nipplegall psyllids, respectively). And as these insects (along with multicolored Asian lady beetles) are strong fliers, they may come from beyond an individual’s property line.

A more productive tact would be clearing away any items/debris/stored materials around the outer perimeter of homes/buildings/garages/structures which provide protective hiding places. Next, closely inspect home foundations to locate and repair/fill portals of entry. Check windows and door ways making sure that they are in good condition and properly sealed/weather-stripped. Repair or replace exclusionary screening over and behind soffit openings, gable vents, roof vents, breezeways and chimneys. Consider a 6-12-foot “barrier” insecticide spray treatment around homes/buildings, and (possibly) extending up the side of the structures.

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BE PREPARED TO ACCEPT THAT despite one's best efforts, insect/arthropod "visitors" likely will still be encountered indoors. Simply remove and dispose of them ---by hand, vacuum or any other method-of-choice.

*Bob Bauernfeind*

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## Army Cutworms

Army cutworm adults have returned to KS (see photos). As most of you know, army cutworm larvae feed on anything green and growing. Agriculturally, that usually means wheat and/or alfalfa, as these are the only crops growing in the fall when the moths are flying around laying their eggs. These eggs will hatch this fall and the small larvae will feed all winter, anytime the temperature is above about 48°F, but they will be too small to cause much damage, or even be noticed, until spring. If populations are substantial enough, they can severely thin alfalfa (especially 1<sup>st</sup> year fields) and wheat, usually starting to be noticed in March and April. The larvae hide in the soil at the base of the plants, feeding mainly at night in fall and spring, until they pupate, usually around Memorial Day. The adults, often called "miller moths", fly west to the mountains of Colorado where they overwinter before heading back in the fall. Volunteer wheat is an acceptable host until planted wheat germinates, so this is another good reason to control volunteer. We have found more moths this fall than ever before and as far east as Dickinson Co, so far.



Army Cutworm Moth

## Army Cutworm Larva



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*Jeff Whitworth*

*Holly Davis*

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### **Report from the Kansas State University Insect Diagnostic Laboratory:**

The following samples were submitted to the Insect Diagnostic Laboratory from September 7<sup>th</sup> to September 13<sup>th</sup>, 2012.

September 10 – Johnson County – Snout nosed weevils on roses

September 10 – Phillips County – Varied carpet beetles and bed bugs in home

September 10 – Wyandotte County – Sap beetles in commercial building

September 11 – Barton County – Drugstore beetles in home

September 11 – Lyon County – Honeylocust bruchid around home

September 11 – Pratt County – Elm sphinx caterpillar in driveway



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September 12 – Phillips County – Indianmeal moths in home

September 12 – Leavenworth County – Boxelder bugs around home

September 12 – Norton County – False chinch bugs around home and out-buildings

September 13 – Ford County – Sap beetle larvae in maple tree

September 13 – Reno County – Black carpet beetle larvae and adults in home

September 13 – Barton County – San Jose scale insects on cotoneaster

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](mailto:GotBugs@ksu.edu).

*Holly Davis*

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**Sincerely,**

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