

URBAN PEST NEWS

Mosquitoes

Mosquitoes have four life stages: egg, larvae, pupae and adult. Eggs are usually laid in water or areas that are flooded by water. Larvae live in water and are often called wigglers. Pupae are mostly found on the surface of water. When the surface of the water is disturbed, they move away in a tumbling motion giving them their name "tumblers." Adults are the only non-water stage of mosquitoes.



Adults often sit in thick vegetation during the day. Males feed on liquid carbohydrates such as nectar. Females feed on nectar as well, but also require a blood meal before they can produce eggs.

Adult mosquitoes live for about one month, depending on environmental conditions. Some adults can travel over a mile from their breeding site, but most species stay within 200 yards of the original site. Since adults can be adept at flying, it can make creating a mosquito management program difficult at times.



Mosquito Tips For your Customers

Eliminate breeding sites

- ◆ reduce standing water
- ◆ repair leaky pipes and faucets
- ◆ use Bt or fish in ponds that cannot be drained

Reduce habitats for adult mosquitoes

- ◆ keep grass mowed
- ◆ trim foliage on plants to allow air circulation

Avoid contact with mosquitoes

- ◆ keep screens in good repair
- ◆ avoid peak mosquito hours- dusk & dawn
- ◆ use repellent on your self & your pets
- ◆ wear loose fitting long sleeves & long pants

Chiggers

Chiggers are the parasitic stage of a common mite that in the adult stage are bright red and often called redbugs. The parasitic stage crawls onto plants and waits for a host. Usually hosts are rodents, livestock, birds, reptiles, but humans can be an accidental host. Chiggers are often common in damp areas with low shrubs or tall grass or weeds.

When a human enters a chigger infested area, the chigger crawls upward going under clothing to find a suitable spot to settle down and feed. They commonly feed in areas where clothing is tightly fitted such as around sock or underwear or they may feed in the armpit area or behind the knees.

Many people think that chiggers burrow into the skin or suck blood, both of which are untrue. They inject a digestive enzyme into skin which dissolves tissue that is then sucked up by the chigger as food. Tissue around the feeding area hardens into a feeding tube, called a stylostome, which is left behind when the chigger is dislodged. Itching and irritation of a chigger bite result from the body dissolving the feeding tube left behind by the chigger.

Chigger Tips For your Customers

- ◆ wear protective clothing- tightly woven long pants & long sleeves
- ◆ tuck pants into boots & button sleeves & collar of shirt
- ◆ use repellent containing DEET or picaridin
- ◆ launder clothes after each wear
- ◆ take a warm, soapy bath or shower after being in a chigger-infested area
- ◆ keep lawn mowed short
- ◆ hydrocortisone creams and/ or antihistamines may reduce discomfort from itching caused by bites



WebWorms

Webworms attack a variety of plants including fruit, nut and ornamental trees and shrubs. Infestations are rarely fatal, but if they occur repeatedly over several years, they can stress trees and make them more susceptible to drought, disease or other insect pests.

Full grown webworm larvae are about an inch long. They are usually pale green to yellow with tufts of long black and white hairs. The adult moth is white with small, dark



spots on the front wings. Webworms create webbing in which they feed. Webbing often covers entire branches since webworms expand webbing as they run out of leaves to feed on within the web.

Encourage customers to inspect trees that usually become infested and remove leaves with egg masses found on the underside. Webbing may also be removed from trees, if reachable, by using a stick or broom. When webbing is high in a tree, high pressure water spray may be used to knock webbing down. If possible, webs can be pruned from the tree. Open webs using a broom or water hose to allow beneficials to enter the webs.



Bacillus thuringiensis kurstaki is a biological pesticide that targets caterpillars. Other products include active ingredients such as spinosad, cyfluthrin, permethrin, carbaryl or acephate. Acephate is a systemic pesticide and is taken into the plant tissue. Read the label to check what plants it may be used on. All chemical labels should be read and followed.

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Chinch bugs

Chinch bugs can be very damaging to lawns in Texas. Chinch bug damage shows up as irregular patches of dead or dying grass surrounded by a halo of yellowing grass. Damage areas often increase in size as the infestation expands and can rapidly grow in size, especially in hot, dry weather.

Chinch bug adults are approximately 1/6-1/5 of an inch long with black bodies and white wings. Each wing has a triangular black marking. Immature chinch bugs are smaller than adults and have wing pads or no wings.



Nymphs, or immatures, that have recently hatched are pinkish with a white band across their back. With each molt, nymphs grow more similar in appearance to the adults, eventually becoming black to brownish-black.

To determine if turf damage is from chinch bugs, visually inspect the turf. Look at the border between the dead and dying grass. Part the grass with your hands and look for chinch bugs crawling around. Another method is to cut both ends from a coffee can and keep it filled with water for 5-10 minutes and see if the bugs float to the top.

To avoid chinch bug problems, resistant varieties of turf may be used. If turf cannot be replaced, try to keep thatch to a minimum to reduce living areas for the chinch bugs. Techniques for reducing thatch include: proper mowing, using a mulching mower when possible, aerating the lawn, top dressing the lawn, fertilizing properly and watering properly.

Chemical treatments for chinch bugs come in liquid and granular form. Granular treatments can be applied with a fertilizer spreader and watered into the grass. If chinch bugs are isolated in a particular part of the lawn, perform a spot treatment for the given area. Make sure to read and follow all label instructions.

For more information, contact:

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