



Questions from the Floor

By Dr. R. Chris Williamson, Department of Entomology, University of Wisconsin-Madison

*How do you explain the sporadic distribution/occurrence of Japanese beetle activity and damage this year? **Waukesha County***

Although Japanese beetles are widespread in Wisconsin, their distribution or occurrence is readily influenced by soil moisture. If you recall, the majority of Wisconsin was deficient in rainfall from the early spring through late July. Due to their strategic behavior, Japanese beetle females typically seek out areas of turf or ground cover that have sufficient soil moisture to lay their eggs. Consequently, irrigated turf areas such as golf courses are often the most vulnerable turf areas when dry conditions exist. This is likely the reason that you observed such a sporadic distribution of Japanese beetles this year.

*Considering the substantial rainfall (>18 inches in less than three weeks) that occurred in August, what impact will it have on my preventative white grub (Japanese beetle) insecticide treatment that I made in late June? **Dane County***

Three of the four commercially available, preventative white grub insecticides are from the nicotinoid insecticide class. Some nicotinoids have physical characteristics that are more favorable for movement with water. Consequently, such products may be more susceptible or likely to move via excessive rainfall. Unfortunately, I am not aware of any published data that addresses this question. Thus, it is important to closely monitor or inspect the areas of turf that were treated with a nicotinoid insecticide such as clothianidin (Arena), imidacloprid (Merit), or thiamethoxam (Meridian). I have not observed any problems or issues associated with excessive moisture on nicotinoid performance in any of my research studies this year.

*Ants were particularly bad this year compared to most, especially prior the ample rains in August; why were they so bad this year? **Sheboygan County***

The ant species most commonly associated with turf is *Lasius neoniger*, a.k.a. the "turfgrass ant." The turfgrass ant is most common in drier, well-drained sandy soils that have low water holding capacity. Again, much of Wisconsin was deficient in rainfall from the early spring through late July. As a result, conducive conditions resulted in increased ant activity.

Emerald ash borer (EAB) was discovered less than 40 miles from the southern Wisconsin border; when do you expect EAB to be found in Wisconsin?

Kenosha County

The greatest potential threat for movement of EAB into Wisconsin is via EAB infested firewood. This is not to say that EAB infested nursery stock or other ash materials are not important, but many of the EAB infestations discovered in Indiana and Illinois have been linked to EAB infested firewood. The Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection and Department of Natural Resources have been actively communicating the strong message of NOT bringing firewood (all hardwood species) into Wisconsin from out-of-state. Hopefully, people will take this request seriously so that we can keep EAB out of Wisconsin! 🌱

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