

Turf Grass TRENDS



Volume 3, Issue 5

May 1994

Chinch bugs, a refresher course

by Christopher Sann

Cool-season turf-grasses stands can suffer from the infestations of up to three different species of chinch bugs at the same time.

The primary species of cool-season turf is the hairy chinch bug, *Blissus leucopterus hirtus*. The common chinch bug, *Blissus leucopterus leucopterus*, affects a larger geographic area but produces less damage.

In warm season turf areas, turf is subject to infestation by the southern chinch bug, *Blissus insularis*.

In areas where their distribution areas overlap, the different species can form a chinch bug complex that was described in scientific literature as long ago as 1926. Because of many similarities in morphology (size, shape, coloration and function) it is virtually impossible to tell the difference between individual species when two or more of the chinch bug species form this complex.

Chinch bug distribution

The common chinch bug is the most widely distributed of the three species and has been identified in 26



Photo provided by Dr. Mike Villani, Cornell University

A short-winged version of a Hairy Chinch Bug adult.

states, ranging from the eastern slopes of the Rockies, through the Midwest, south to the Piedmont states and across the southern tier of states, north of Florida.

The hairy chinch bug is found from the southern Canadian provinces, through the New England states to the mid-Atlantic area and west to Minnesota.

The southern chinch bug is found in all of the southern states, west across northern Mexico to California. The area of overlap for the two northern species, common and hairy, occurs in the states bordering the Mason-Dixon line and the upper Midwest, while the southern tier of states north of Florida and west to Texas comprises the area of overlap of the common and the southern species.

Host and site conditions

The hairy chinch bug infests stands of most of the cool-season grasses: bluegrasses, bentgrasses, ryegrasses, fine fescues, and zoysia. The southern chinch bug infests primarily St. Augustine grass but it has been found on almost any warm season turf species, occasionally including monocot weed species.

The common chinch bug is primarily a pest of small grains and

IN THIS ISSUE

IN-DEPTH ARTICLES

Chinch bugs, a refresher course
by Christopher Sann 1

Alternative strategies for
controlling chinch bugs
by Christopher Sann 6

Scouting for chinch bugs
by Christopher Sann 8

No link between fertilization
and chinch bug activity 12

INTERACTIONS

Wind, application drift and
the applicator
by Christopher Sann 10

A welcome to our new
subscribers
by Juergen Haber 11

NEWS BRIEFS

Genetics plays role in
insecticide resistance 13

Milky spore disease may not
be a control for grubs 13

Health effects on farmers .. 14

Bermuda grass can be
controlled in tall fescue 14

High endophyte levels in
tall fescue 15

COMING ATTRACTIONS .. 15

RESOURCES 15

ASK THE EXPERT 15