



Pumping & Piping Systems

Turfgrass Insect Guide

Turfgrass Insect Management Guide

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Introduction

Insects cause millions of dollars worth of damage each year to residential, commercial, and recreational turf. This guide covers the major insects found in South Carolina that cause injury to grasses. It contains important information about the biology of each pest in order to gain a better understanding of how best to control them and when to make pesticide applications. Although it does not cover every insect that causes damage, the ones listed are the most common and problematic.

Not all insects are considered pests in the lawn. Some insects are actually beneficial and prey on damaging insects. It is important to properly identify insects before making a pesticide application. Most lawns will tolerate a certain level of insect damage. Proper cultural practices will greatly increase the lawns ability to recover from damaging insects. Correct irrigation practices and fertility programs are crucial for minimizing pest problems. See your local W.P. Law Inc. store for the latest in irrigation equipment and fertilizer programs. This information is meant to be a guide for controlling insects in your lawn. Consult all labels for specific information in regards to insecticides and their use. Labels are subject to change and should be adhered to. Always remember, the label is the law.

Fire Ants

Since their arrival in the 1930's, the red imported fire ant has found life in the Southeast area of the United States very inviting. The first infestations are thought to have originated from cargo ships from South America harboring in Mobile, Alabama. Since this time, fire ants have quickly spread and adapted quite nicely to the warm, humid conditions of the Southeast. The name fire ant derives from the intense stinging pain felt after their bite. Fire ant bites on humans have resulted in symptoms ranging from stinging to rashes all the way to paralysis and anaphylactic shock in some instances. Humans are not the only ones that feel the wrath of these tiny insects as pets, livestock, and wildlife are susceptible to bites as well. Fire ants are also responsible for damage to electrical equipment, agricultural implements, and crop damage in some instances.

This guide is designed to help you better understand how fire ants function in your landscape and also informative techniques you can use to seek revenge on the red imported fire ant. By understanding the biology of this pest and using the proper insecticide program, individuals can achieve maximum control.

Background

Fire ants live in colonies that can contain single or multiple queens. Inside the colony there are various stages of the life cycle represented, ranging from eggs, larvae, pupae, to adults. Inside the colony, there are winged males and winged females along with workers and one or more queens.



Fall Armyworms

Life Cycle

Fall armyworms are the larvae form of adult moths. Armyworms do not over-winter in South Carolina, so they are generated when moths migrate upward into the state in the month of June. Adult moths can lay up to 1,000 eggs that take from 2-10 days to hatch. Once hatched, small larvae begin to spread in search of food. Fall armyworms prefer lush tender grasses with bermuda being their favorite. Fall armyworms are most active during morning and late afternoon, but continue to feed throughout the day. Fall armyworms feed for 2-3 weeks before they burrow down into the soil and pupate. Within two weeks, adult moths emerge and the life cycle begins all over again. Fall armyworms usually have several generations throughout the year.

Armyworms received their name due to their ability to quickly march in and rapidly consume large amounts of turf. Most grasses will recover from fall armyworm damage. Warm-season grasses can be more susceptible to winter kill if damage occurs in late fall. Fall armyworms can damage cool season grasses down to the growing point causing them to die. Fall armyworm pressure may vary from year to year. Cool, wet springs favor the pest due to an absence of natural parasites. Armyworms feed on the above ground tissues of grasses. Areas along wood lines generally are the first to show symptoms of feeding.

Identification

Fall armyworms are identified by an inverted "Y" mark on the back of their head. Colors of fall armyworms vary from green, to gray, to black. They have a black longitudinal stripe down their back and four distinct black dots on the dorsal side of each segment.

Controlling Fall Armyworms

Controlling fall armyworms with insecticides should begin as soon as minimum threshold levels are met. Generally applications should begin when populations reach one armyworm per square foot. Insecticides work best during the early stage of fall armyworm development. Armyworms can grow quickly over a period of two weeks and insecticide applications will not be as effective on larger armyworms. Repeat applications of insecticides are necessary in some situations.

Fall Armyworm Insecticides

Aloft	(bifenthrin + clothianidin)
Bifen I/T	(bifenthrin)
Bifen L/P	(bifenthrin)
Cyzmic	(lambda-cyhalothrin)
Sevin	(carbaryl)



This guide is an informal reference to herbicides available for controlling common insects. It is not meant to supplement any product labels. Insecticide labels should always be consulted before being applied. Labels are subject to change. Due to differences in grass varieties, environmental conditions, temperature, stress, moisture conditions, plant health, and other factors insecticide applications may cause undesirable injury to grasses. W.P. Law Inc. does not guarantee or warranty the use of insecticide listed in this guide. Please remember that the label is the law.

Please visit our web site for more information

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