

Issues in Agriculture

The Newsletter about Integrated Pest Management for the El Paso Valley

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ANNOUNCEMENTS

- You can download this and other IPM newsletters, check updates, and view upcoming events at the El Paso Texas A&M AgriLife Extension IPM website: <http://elp.tamu.edu/integrated-pest-management/>
- A regional one-day “**School IPM Program**” for integrated pest management coordinators will be held on June 18 at Ysleta ISD Transportation Center, 7944 Yermoland, El Paso, TX 79907. Janet Hurley, Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service Program Specialist will be providing the training. AgriLife Extension is the only state agency that conducts required training in school IPM to help school IPM coordinators in the area obtaining their mandated six hours of credit every three years. The program is scheduled from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., and the pre-registration fee is \$135. Registration at the door will be \$155. Advanced registration is suggested at <https://agriliferegister.tamu.edu>. The course will cover legal requirements for schools, an introduction to IPM, how to monitor schools under the new requirements, and a hands-on exercise to understand the difference between Green, Yellow and Red category pesticides. For more information go to <http://schoolipm.tamu.edu> or call 877-747-6872.
- **Gardening 101 Workshop Series:** All sessions are free of charge and will be held at the Multipurpose Center on 9301 Viscount. On June 26, from 4:00 PM to 5:30 PM, the topic of discussion on this date will be Integrated Pest Management: Bugs in your Garden. Information: Denise Rodriguez Texas A&M AgriLife Extension (915) 860-2515.
- **Texas Pecan Growers Association Annual Conference & Trade Show:** July 12-15, 2015. Embassy Suites, Frisco, TX. Contact TPGA, 979-846-3285 or pecans@tpga.org

GENERAL SITUATION:

This year, June started cooler than usual. Our record for maximum daily temperature during the last 10 days was a “mild” 99°F (average 96.3°F). No day in June reached the triple-digit mark! In fact, according to the NOAA National Weather Service weather, using data collected at El Paso International Airport, we have not reached 100°F so far this year. For the next 10 days, maximum temperatures are forecasted in the high 90s (96°F-99°F) with our first 100°F-day probably on June 14. A total of 2.61 inches of precipitation have been recorded this year. Compared to the 1.82 inches average (period from 1981 to 2010), we have received an extra 0.79 inches. Fields are currently receiving flood irrigation in El Paso Lower Valley.

COTTON:

Cotton plants range from 5 to 8 true leaves corresponding to dates when the fields were planted. In general, the crop is developing normally and most cotton fields look fine, but there are a few fields exhibiting water stress, weak plant development, and large row skips.

Contrary to other parts of Texas, thrips are usually not a problem in our region and this season has not been the exception. In the next couple of weeks, we need to scout for cotton fleahoppers and Lygus bugs. Cotton plants will begin squaring and become susceptible to these pests. Cotton fleahoppers feed on pinhead or smaller squares in the terminals while Lygus bugs

Cotton fleahopper (photo by Tim W. McAlavy)



Lygus, western tarnished plant bug (photo by Tim W. McAlavy)



feed on squares and small bolls. Cotton fleahoppers and Lygus feeding damage causes shedding of the squares. For the last 3 years, Lygus bugs have occurred at damaging population levels in El Paso/Hudspeth Counties and many cotton growers made insecticide applications for this pest.

Heat Units: <http://www.cottonheatunits.com/> makes it convenient to calculate heat units based on your exact planting date and average temperatures for El Paso. This site also provides forecasts for the heat units that may be accumulated in the next 7 days. It calculates observations and forecasts using data from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's National Weather Service and long-term historical averages from the National Climate Data Center. Using this website, with weather data collected at the El Paso International Airport, and selecting 8 planting dates, I generated the following table:

Planting date	Accumulated heat units until June 9	Historical average heat units until June 9	Forecast heat units until June 16
April 15	679	652	795
April 19	664	632	774
April 23	629	608	750
April 27	607	579	721
May 1	601	547	689
May 5	542	516	658
May 9	495	476	618
May 13	465	432	574

Degree Days: DD-60s required for cotton development.

Event	DD-60s from Planting
Emergence (stand establishment)	45-130
Appearance of first square	440-530
Appearance of first flowers	780-900
Peak Blooming	1350-1500
First open boll	1650-1850
Defoliation	1900-2600

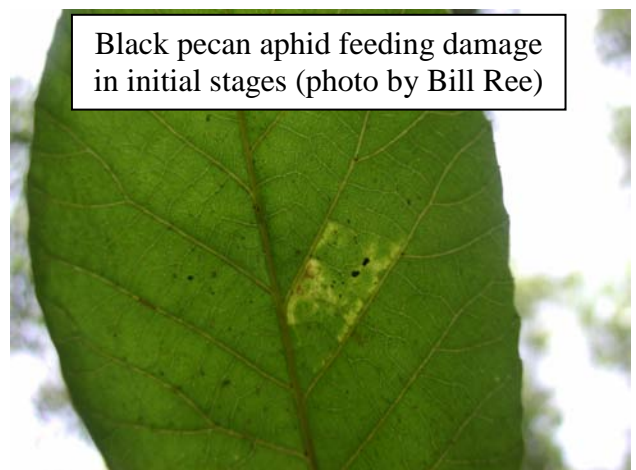
PECAN:

By now, you should have replaced the liners and pheromone lures in your pecan nut casebearer (PNC) traps. If you have not performed this activity, you need to do it shortly. The **second generation of pecan nut casebearer** moths is upon us. Our primary concern is usually first generation PNC, but sometimes the second and even the third generations have the potential to cause significant yield loss. This year, some pecan growers captured first generation PNC moths for a relatively long period. Usually, insect populations fluctuate in response to weather and plant conditions. Of course, many other factors can influence insect abundance as well. I suspect that a mild winter and a cool spring resulted in a wide period of moth emergence; consequently, several growers had to make more than one insecticide application to achieve adequate control. The first PNC captures in El Paso region occurred on April 23 near Tornillo. According to the AgriLife publication "*Controlling the Pecan Nut Casebearer*", there are 41 to 54 days between the first and second PNC generations. There are 48 days between April 23 and June 10; therefore, most likely we are going to start seeing the second PNC generation in our traps any day now.

The **blackmargined pecan aphids** have yet to be a problem this season, but this is the time of the year when we usually need to control this aphid species. Careful monitoring is advisable. Action thresholds stand at 25 blackmargined pecan aphids per compound leaf in average. Both adults and nymphs remove sap from the leaves resulting in loss of nutrients. This pest develops resistance quite readily. You should make your decision whether or not to control this pest based on actual aphid counts and not on honeydew accumulation on the leaves. In the last three years, field research conducted in our area has shown that imidacloprid based insecticides provide little or no blackmargined aphid control. I would not recommend the use of insecticides in the group 4A, at least for a few more years, to increase aphid susceptibility to this insecticide group.

Black pecan aphids:

A couple of weeks ago, pecan leaves started showing symptoms of black pecan aphid feeding damage and some growers made insecticide applications. Only three black pecan aphids per compound leaf, in average, are needed to cause severe leaf damage and defoliation. We can probably tolerate a few more black pecan aphids later in the season than at this time. Obviously, early defoliation may have a more detrimental effect on yields.



FLEA BEETLE INVASION!

During the last week and a half, I have received many calls and emails requesting identification and management advice describing iridescent green to black small beetles. Several El Paso residents mentioned that they had never seen these insects in such abundance. One customer said that the beetles had decimated her Mexican marigolds. Others report finding these beetles on their vehicles or entering their homes at night. They were briefly covered by KFOX-TV in yesterday's evening news (June 9). You can view the news report at <http://tinyurl.com/opmhoqk>. The insects in question are called flea beetles due to their habit of jumping resembling fleas. This species belongs to the genus *Altica* spp in the family Chrysomelidae or leaf beetles. The flea beetles move around by flying, but usually jump when disturbed. Their hind legs are enlarged with big muscles that allow them to make a quick getaway jump. Flea beetles have chewing mouthparts and feed on a large variety of plants including: vegetables, flowers, shrubs, and trees. I have found them in extreme abundance in alfalfa fields. Insecticides containing Bifenthrin, Permethrin, or Carbaryl (e.g. Sevin) as active ingredients should be effective in killing the beetles. I would recommend being patient, if you can, and wait for the population to crash. I have started seeing a marked decrease in flea beetle numbers in east El Paso.



Flea beetles, *Altica* spp. Family Chrysomelidae (leaf beetles)

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