

North Carolina Pest News

Departments of Entomology and Plant Pathology



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CAUTION !

The information and recommendations in this newsletter are applicable to North Carolina and may not apply in other areas.

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http://ipm.ncsu.edu/current_ipm/pest_news.html

ANNOUNCEMENTS AND GENERAL INFORMATION

From: North Carolina Dept. of Agriculture & Consumer Services News Release, June 15, 2006

NCDA&CS Merging Pesticide-related Units into One Division

“The North Carolina Department of Agriculture & Consumer Services (NCDA&CS) is merging its two units that regulate pesticides and pest control companies, Agriculture Commissioner Steve Troxler announced June 15, 2006.

“The Department’s Pesticide Section will join the Structural Pest Control Division to become the Structural Pest Control and Pesticides Division. Employees have begun the merger, which will be official July 1. The Pesticide Section previously was part of the Food and Drug Protection Division.

“The new division will be responsible for protecting public health and the environment by ensuring that commercial and non-commercial pesticide applicators comply with state pesticide laws and regulations. It will also make sure companies that treat houses, schools and other buildings for pests operate safely and fairly.

“Combining the two programs into one division, which is the arrangement in many states, will help them function more efficiently, Troxler said. ‘It just makes sense to have these programs together. We can make both programs stronger, which will benefit the public,’ he said.

“No jobs will be lost as a result of the merger. Jim Burnette Jr., administrator of the Pesticide Section, is overseeing the merger as acting director. Carl Falco, longtime director of the Structural Pest Control Division, retired June 1 after 30 years of state service.

“The new division will have about 75 employees across the state. Its administrative offices will be located in the Ballentine Building on Blue Ridge Road in Raleigh. The public can call (919) 733-6100 for structural pest control matters and (919) 733-3556 for other pesticide-related issues.”

FIELD AND FORAGE CROPS

From: Jack S. Bachelier, Extension Entomologist

Cotton Thrips

Much of North Carolina’s cotton production area is presently very soggy, with many cotton producers still several days away from returning to their fields despite good drying conditions. These conditions are probably helpful in avoiding further thrips damage to cotton and also good for keeping spider mites in check (at least for now), but terrible for weed management. In all but a very few rare situations, thrips are now “history” for 2006. Even our April 4 planted untreated check plots at the Upper Coastal Plain Research Station averaged less than one immature thrips per plant this past week, so levels of flying adult thrips should be down considerably in most areas of the state. All in all, most cotton producers are probably glad to get this “ugly thrips season” behind us.

In retrospect, we appear to have experienced a rough combination of slow growing plants, heavy thrips populations, and high western flower thrips levels in some areas. If there are good management approaches for these hard to control western flower thrips, they are not readily apparent. Western flower thrips seem to become a problem more in hot, dry weather, but that was not always the case this year. Orthene at 0.5 pound of active ingredient (or more) is said to be about as good as one can do for control of this species, but that was not always true this year. Other products for thrips, such as Vydate, Bidrin, dimethoate and pyrethroid insecticides, are reportedly less effective against this species. Perhaps the extensive use of seed treatments helped western flower thrips along via extensive foliar insecticide spraying at less than effective rates for this species, though the two worst “western flower thrips fields” (90 to 100 percent western flower thrips) identified in the Plant Disease and Insect Clinic at North Carolina State University were planted to Temik at 5 pounds of product per acre, followed by Orthene sprays. Thankfully, western flower thrips are only a problem in some years on part of our cotton acreage, though not a pleasant pest if you’re the victim.

Spider Mites and Cotton Aphids

With all of this rain, it will probably take a while for spider mites to materialize. Mites will probably be the pest to watch for in the coming weeks, along with cotton aphids and possible plant bugs.

Bollworms and Tobacco Budworms

Bollworms should not be a problem on Bollgard or Widestrike cotton until at least a week after the major moth flight begins. Tobacco budworms should not be an economic problem on any of the Bt cottons, though both species can still cause considerable damage to conventional cotton. Black light trapping for bollworms moths and stink bugs will begin in late June or early July.

Upcoming Cotton Scouting Schools

Northampton County: Thursday, July 20 from 9:30 to 11:30 a.m. at the County Administration Building, Jackson, North Carolina. Contact Craig Ellison (telephone: 252-534-2711; e-mail: craig_ellison@ncsu.edu) for details.

Halifax County: Thursday, July 20 from 1:30 to 3:30 p.m. at the Agricultural Building, Halifax, North Carolina. Contact Arthur Whitehead (telephone: 252-583-5161; e-mail: arthur_whitehead@ncsu.edu) for details.

Wayne, Sampson and Duplin counties: Friday, July 7 from 9:30 to 11:30 a.m. at the Mount Olive College Agri-Business Center, Mount Olive, North Carolina. Contact Kevin Johnson (telephone: 919-731-1520; e-mail: kevin_johnson@ncsu.edu) for details and directions.

Edgecombe County: Thursday, July 13 from 10:00 to 12:00 noon at the Eastern Carolina Agriculture and Education Center, Kingsboro, Exit 478, Highway 64, approximately 6 miles east of Rocky Mount, North Carolina. Contact Art Bradley (telephone: 252-641-7815; e-mail: art_bradley@ncsu.edu) for details.

Nash and Wilson counties: Tuesday, July 18, 4:00 to 6:00 p.m. at the Wilson County Agricultural Center, 1806 S. Goldsboro Street, Wilson, North Carolina. Contact Norman Harrell (telephone: 252-237-0111; e-mail: norman.harrell@ncsu.edu) for details.

ORNAMENTALS AND TURF

From: Stephen B. Bambara, Extension Entomologist

Fungus Gnats in the Yard

With plentiful moisture, conditions are favorable for fungus gnat larvae (Fig. 1) in lawns. Darkwinged fungus gnats are native insects that are normally not noticed because they inhabit decaying organic matter outdoors and they are usually not particularly abundant in the overall landscape. Sometimes fungus gnats emerge in large numbers and are noticeable because they congregate around the house or on plants in the yard. Except for being a nuisance, fungus gnats in the yard are harmless. One exceptional thing about fungus gnat maggots is their mass migration apparently in search of a new food source. The maggots stick together and slither along in a ribbon sometimes as much as one inch wide and a yard long so that the mass of larvae resembles a silvery snake (Fig. 2)! This is a startling sight, but is perfectly harmless. For more information about fungus gnats, see *Ornamental and Turf Insect Information Note Number 29* (<http://www.ces.ncsu.edu/depts/ent/notes/O&T/flowers/note29/note29.html>). For information on fungus gnats in the house, see *Residential, Structural and Community Pests Insect Note Number 29* (<http://www.ces.ncsu.edu/depts/ent/notes/Urban/fungusgnat.htm>).



Fig. 1. Fungus gnat larva. Image from James R. Baker.



Fig. 2. Fungus gnat larva “snake”.
Image from D. Wright.

Citrus Whiteflies and Black Sooty Mold Fungus on Gardenia

The citrus whitefly (Fig. 3) is a tiny white insect about 2 mm in length. It is not a true fly. Females insert their eggs into the lower surface of the leaves of gardenia and Swedish ivy. Soon the immature stages hatch into scale-like insects that suck sap from the lower leaf surface. They

are often mistakenly reported as scale. Look for ant activity, honeydew, or sooty mold on these plants. There is additional information in Publication AG-136, *Insect and Related Pests of Flowers and Foliage Plants* (<http://ipm.ncsu.edu/AG136/ncstate.html>). Citrus whiteflies suck sap from the plant and excrete honeydew, a sweet, sticky substance. Sooty molds go hand-in-hand with infestations of citrus whitefly. Sooty molds (Fig. 4) grow in the honeydew and cause infested bushes to become dull and dark. Horticultural oils should give good control of the citrus whitefly. Orthene is also effective.



Fig. 4. A citrus whitefly.
Image from James R. Baker.



Fig. 4. Sooty molds caused by citrus whiteflies.
Image from James R. Baker.

Recommendations for the use of chemicals are included in this publication as a convenience to the reader. The use of brand names and any mention or listing of commercial products or services in this publication does not imply endorsement by North Carolina State University, North Carolina A&T State University or North Carolina Cooperative Extension nor discrimination against similar products or services not mentioned. Individuals who use chemicals are responsible for ensuring that the intended use complies with current regulations and conforms to the product label. Be sure to obtain current information about usage regulations and examine a current product label before applying any chemical. For assistance, contact an agent of North Carolina Cooperative Extension.

Employment and program opportunities are offered to all people regardless of race, color, national origin, sex, age or disability. North Carolina State University, North Carolina A&T State University, U.S. Department of Agriculture, and local governments cooperating.

