



Texas AgriLife Extension TEXAS PECAN PEST MANAGEMENT NEWSLETTER



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GENERAL

Although some areas have received some rain, drought still grips most pecan producing areas. Overall I would say the crop is fair to moderate, just depends on where you are looking. I've seen orchards where some varieties look good while other varieties in the same orchard are very light. We will see what happens with the June drop.

INSECTS

Aphids: Blackmargiend and yellow pecan aphid populations are starting to build which is expected but definitely not at any treatable levels. Black pecan aphids can be found but I have never seen any problems from this species during the spring and early summer and I defer any treatments until after mid-July.

Fire ants: For those areas fortunate enough to receive some rain you are probably seeing an

increase in fire ant activity. I feel the best recommendation for commercial orchards are the baits. There are several baits labeled for pecan, some of these being Extinguish, Distance, Esteem and Award. Baits work best if applied in the morning or evening in order to avoid the heat of the day when ants may not be foraging. Prior to any bait application I recommend a pre-bait test to see if the ants are actively foraging. Place some bait in an open area away from a mound then come back in 30 or 45 minutes to see if the ants are actively picking up the bait. If they are then make the treatment, if not, then try the bait test again in a day or two.

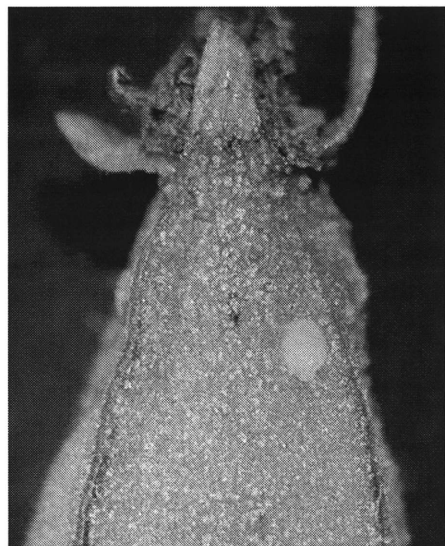
Pecan nut casebearer: First generation PNC was early this year and for some areas one to two weeks early. This was definitely a year when the PNC traps paid for themselves by alerting producers to the early start. Now that the first generation has passed it is time to look at that "next" generation.

2nd Generation Pecan Nut Casebearer: When it comes to pecan nut casebearer, almost all the emphasis at meetings centers around the first generation. This is understandably justified because of the potential impact of this generation on a crop. In most years producers have to treat for the first generation while in most years producers do not have to treat for the second generation. By the time the second generation arrives nutlets have sized and larvae will require fewer nutlets to complete development.

For orchards with good to heavy crops some second generation damage could be a good thing. However, during a light crop year and especially if prices look to be strong, the impact of the second generation PNC could be significant.

I've always felt that the pecan nut casebearer pheromone trap is one of the best investments a producer can make for his/her pest management program. All of the emphasis with this trap has been for monitoring the first generation but with the addition of fresh pheromone lures or new traps and lures, we have the ability to monitor the onset of the second generation flight. Not only can the onset of a flight be detected, eggs laid by the second generation females are still relatively easy to find. Second generation eggs are still laid on the stigma end in the indentations around the dried stigma as shown in the picture.

From what we refer to as "the Bible of PNC", which is Bilsing's 1926 publication "The life history and control of the pecan nut casebearer", Bilsing states that eggs of the second generation hatch in 4 or 5 days and after hatching larvae feed on buds below the clusters before entering the nutlets. In this publication which is based on Dr. Bilsing's casebearer observations from 1918 through 1923, second generation adult emergence at College Station ranged from the earliest emergence date of June 5th in 1918 to the latest date of June 15th in 1923.



PNC egg on side of nutlet

Walnut caterpillar: Although no reports of walnut caterpillar have been received at this time, it will soon be time to watch for activity.

The walnut caterpillar has overwintered as pupae in the soil under and around host trees. Adult moths emerge in the late spring with females laying egg masses on the under-side of leaflets. The egg masses are about the size of a silver dollar and can contain 600 eggs or more. These egg masses are laid in a single layer and are not covered with any scales from the female moth as with fall webworm egg masses.



Remains of walnut caterpillar egg mass

The initial sign of an infestation will be terminals with missing foliage but still containing the leaf rachis.

Walnut caterpillars feed in colonies through the first 4 instars and do not construct a web. There are 5 instars or stages of larval development and it is the last or 5th instar that causes the most damage. Research has shown that of all the foliage consumed during larval development approximately 80% of that is consumed during the 5th instar. This means that a lot of damage can be done in a very short amount of time.

There are a lot of natural enemies, both predators and parasites that help keep populations in check but when control is needed an insecticide will have to be applied. Insecticides that are selective to "caterpillars" are recommended. For a list of labeled products go to <http://pecan.ipmpipe.org> and look in the tool box for the insecticide data base then search for walnut caterpillar.

Based on the number of frost free days across Texas we know the walnut caterpillar has multiple (3 generations per year in the southern portion of the state and 2 generations in the northern area) generations and has the ability to go from almost non-detectable in one generation to over whelming the environment in the next generation. We always need to stay vigilante on this one.

Stink bugs/ Leaffooted bugs: Although it is a bit early to worry about this group, I am interested in collecting data or information on damage from these kernel feeding insects. Last fall I did observe some orchards that had 20 +% damage which added up to some significant and serious losses. I am interested in the percent of crop damage, varieties and estimated loss. This type of information is important when preparing proposals for grants. Any information can be emailed to me at w-ree@tamu.edu.

Wildlife Management: Feral Hogs
Last Friday, May 20th, I attended the O.D. Butler Forage Field day and one of the presentations I listened to was on feral hog management. During the presentation, one thing that was really emphasized was the use of wildlife cameras in a feral hog trapping program. These cameras can tell you who is coming to your trap, how they approach it, how many are coming and when they are coming. If you are not using a camera for your traps you might want to think about it. The experts in this area highly recommend them.

We usually think of wildlife management as something to do near harvest but I have learned and as I have been told, wildlife management in whatever form has to be a year round project. For more information on feral hogs check out this site: <http://feralhogs.tamu.edu>

MEETINGS / EDUCATIONAL EVENTS
The following are county/state meetings I'm aware of at this time:

State Meeting

June 16-17, 2011
Tri State ArkLaMiss Pecan Trade Show and Convention
Bossier City, LA
Contact: Stephen Norman @ 318-448-3139

June 26 – 28, 2011
Oklahoma Pecan Growers Conference
Bartlesville, OK
Contact: Janice Landgraf @ 580-795-7644

July 10-13, 2011
Texas Pecan Growers Annual Conference and Trade show
Frisco, TX
Contact: TPGA @ 979-846-3285

September 14 – 15, 2011
Alabama Pecan Growers annual meeting
Fairhope, AL

September 16, 2011
Arizona Pecan Growers annual meeting
Palo Verde Holiday Inn
Tucson, AX
Contact: Mike Kilby @ 520-403-4613

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