

# what's buggin' ya?

AN EDUCATIONAL NEWSLETTER ON MANAGING INSECTS IN OUR ENVIRONMENT  
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*Fleas, chiggers, chinch bugs, oh my! It's hot and the warm season bugs are out. As San Antonio and Texas trudges through one of the worst droughts of our lifetime, the bugs that feed on our plants are being affected worse than they normally would in better times. Read on to learn who to look out for and how to get you and your plants through it!*



Molly Keck

## DEAD LAWN? IS IT CHINCH BUGS?!?

Chinch bugs loooooove hot, dry weather. With all the water restrictions we are experiencing, it makes for a perfect formula for chinch bugs to prosper. If you think you have chinch bugs, the *first* thing you should do before you go out and buy a bunch of pesticides is to properly identify chinch bugs. Chinch bug damage looks just like many fungal damage – dead grass with a halo of yellowing, dying grass surrounding the dead spots. Chinch bugs prefer to live where its extremely hot, especially where the grass meets the sidewalk, concrete, driveway, or foundation of the house. The heat radiates off the asphalt or concrete and that grass is much hotter than the center of the lawn. Chinch bugs also only feed on St. Augustine grasses – if you have damage to other types of grass, its not chinch bugs.

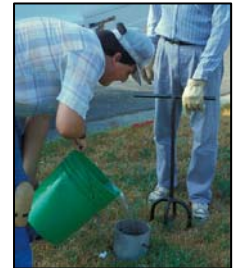
Take an old coffee can, PVC pipe, or other cylindrical tube and work it into the ground where the grass is yellowing. Fill it up with soapy water and after about 15 minutes you should see small little insects floating to the top. If you don't see chinch bugs, don't treat for them.



Photos by: Bart Drees,  
Texas A&M University

There is a type of fungus that many lawn maintenance professionals are finding is prospering during the drought. This may be what's killing your yard, so remember to identify your problem before you treat. Otherwise you are wasting money and pesticides.

Chinch bugs can be controlled using any product that has chinch bugs on the label. If you are thinking of putting in grass, and don't want to deal with chinch bugs in the future, don't choose St. Augustine grass, or choose the Floratam variety, which is resistant to chinch bugs.



## FLEAS... OUR REOCCURRING SUMMER PEST

Every summer, fleas pop up and drive us crazy! Successful flea control involves treating indoors, outdoors and the pet at the **same** time.

For outdoor control, use a contact insecticidal spray or granule. Focus on areas where pets or wildlife rest and areas of foliage and shade. You may also want to treat with an insect growth regulator, which prevents the females from laying viable eggs. Insect growth regulator active ingredients to look for are methoprene and pyriproxyfen. It is extremely important to do a second treatment at 10-14 days after the first. This will get the eggs and pupae that you didn't get the first time. **Never** treat more often than every 10-14 days, or you will get resistance and pesticides will stop working.

For treatment indoors, simply vacuum daily. Remove the bag from the vacuum, or empty the canister and throw it away outdoors. Don't leave it in the house, or the fleas will just jump back out again.

There are many options for treating the pets from shampoos to pills to oils. Consult a veterinarian and the label first and never use these products on young puppies unless the label allows.

For more information see the AgriLife Extension publication E-149 & E-433 found at <http://agrilifebookstore.org>.

## TEXAS AGRILIFE EXTENSION SUMMER CAMP

The Bexar County AgriLife Extension office will be hosting an awesome camp this summer every Wednesday and Friday from July 15<sup>th</sup> – August 14<sup>th</sup>, 9am-2pm. Every week will be a different topic and it should be a great time! You can choose the come to the entire camp, or just by the week.

**Week 1 is Horticulture Week** – we'll be learning about earthworms, playing with earthworms, doing soil experiments, propagating plants, making dirt dessert, and bringing plants home.

**Week 2 is Entomology Week** – we'll be collecting insects, making collections, doing insect experiments and artwork, and playing with live insects.

**Week 3 is Natural Resource Week** – the Edward's Aquifer Authority will be doing their Doc Edward's skit for us, we'll be learning about aquatic habitats, how to conserve water at home, and all about aquatic wildlife.

**Week 4 is Wildlife Week** – Texas Wildlife Department has generously agreed to work with us this week to teach us all about wildlife. We'll even be dissecting quail!

**Week 5 is Agriculture Week** – we'll be learning why agriculture is so important to our daily lives. South Texas Dairy Farmers will bring a milking cow and we'll get to see a cow get milked, we'll make homemade ice cream, get to see a mini cotton gin, learn about wheat and make homemade bread.

The camp fee is \$25 per week, or \$125 for the entire camp. Payment is due on the first day of camp, but you must RSVP by July 9<sup>th</sup>, because space is limited. We are about half way full, so call us as soon as you can! Ages 7-11 are welcome, but if you have older kids who are interested they are more than welcome to participate, we just call them counselors and they get paired with a younger camper.

### Insect Questions and Answers

**Q.** Why am I finding more insects indoors? Are they bad?

**A.** Depends on what they are, but chances are, they are not bad. Your unwelcomed critters are moving indoors for the same reasons you are – its feels better than being outdoors! Get used to it! Unless we have a cool front, we'll continue to see insects and other critters moving indoors for the AC and moisture.

**Q.** How can I get rid or webworms?

**A.** Webworms seem to be worse in droughty years, but they do not kill trees. They defoliate them, but they will leaf back out again. To manage the webworms, break open the webs as much as possible. This may be all you need to do to allow natural enemies to do the work. If not, use anything labeled for caterpillars Bt & Spinosad are organic options; carbaryl, malathion, & permethrin are traditional pesticide options.

### Upcoming Programs

July 7 <sup>th</sup>	Good Bugs, Bad Bugs
Sept 10 <sup>th</sup>	Fire Ant Management
Oct 30 <sup>th</sup>	Spiders: Spooky or Cool?

\*\*The above held at the Extension Office (3355 Cherry Ridge, Suite 212 from 2pm-4pm; free and open to the public.

### Fall Planting Kickoff!

August 19<sup>th</sup> 10-3

\$30 – includes lunch

Antique Rose Emporium, San Antonio

Earn 3 CEUs for private applicators

Please call for registration information 210/467-6575

**For More Info on Insects of Pest Management Contact:**

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Entomology is blogging now! The Bexar County blog is getting started. Visit for pest of the month articles, answers for your insect questions and more! Please be patient, it is still in the beginning phases:

<http://bexarento.blogspot.com>