

what's buggin' ya?

AN EDUCATIONAL NEWSLETTER ON MANAGING INSECTS IN OUR ENVIRONMENT

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Cold weather is approaching and as the temperatures drop insects will move indoors or be less noticeable outdoors. Read on to learn about a new pest, what happens when ladybugs become pests, and how to answer the question “What bug is this?”



Molly Keck

Pest Alert: Chilli Thrips

Chilli thrips are a new pest that homeowners need to be on the look out. Their name can be deceiving because their host range is extremely broad (see table) and includes plants common in nearly every garden. They are becoming most well known for attacking roses.

Description and Damage:

Chilli thrips are very small insects (less than 2 millimeters) and can go unnoticed when inspecting the plant. Chilli thrips feed on plant tissues and cause leaf, bud, and fruit bronzing. Leaves will also appear wilted or curled. Thrips feed by cutting the plant tissue with rasping mouthparts and damage can also appear as small and numerous brown spots on leaves. These spots can be so numerous they appear as one large brown or dead spot. Infested plants may also dwarf or stunt in growth. Buds and petals may drop.

Identification:

If plants show the above symptoms, you can contact Molly Keck (address on next page) for information on how to submit a sample for identification and where to send it.



Nymph



Adult

(Photo's by L. Osborne, University of Florida)

Management:

Chilli thrips are a recent introduction to the US, therefore research on proper control measures is still being performed. Currently, foliar sprays containing the active ingredients spinosad, acephate, and imidacloprid are recommended for ornamental plants.

** Pyrethroids (bifenthrin, cyfluthrin, and permethrin) are not very effective against chilli thrips and harm beneficial insects.**

For more information contact Molly Keck or visit <http://chilithrips.tamu.edu>.



Chilli Thrips Can Be Found on These Plants:

| | | | | |
|---------------|---------------|-------------------|-----------------|----------------|
| Asparagus | Coreopsis | Grape | Mealy cup sage | Snapdragon |
| Azalea | Crape myrtle | Impatiens | Mexican heather | Strawberry |
| Banana | Dahlia | Indian hawthorn | Pentas | Sweet basil |
| Begonia | Duranta | Japanese holly | Petunia | Tabasco pepper |
| Camelia | Edible fig | Japanese photinia | Pittosporum | Tomato |
| Castor bean | Euonymus | Japanese pieris | Podocarpus | Verbena |
| Celosia | Firethorn | Ligustrum | Porcelain berry | Viburnum |
| Chrysanthemum | Geranium | Lisianthus | Purple amaranth | Viola |
| Citrus | Gerbera daisy | Maple | Rose | Zinnia |
| Coleus | | | | |

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What Bug is This?

Where To Get a Bug Identified

Have you ever come across an insect in the garden or home and wondered what it was? It may not even be doing any damage, but you just want to know what it is. There are several great websites and resources that can help with your curiosity.

For Texas bugs visit: <http://insects.tamu.edu/fieldguide>

For termites visit: <http://termite.tamu.edu>

For bees visit: <http://honeybee.tamu.edu>

For vegetable pests and IPM: <http://vigipm.tamu.edu>

For fire ants and other ants: <http://fireant.tamu.edu>

For pecans: <http://pecankernal.tamu.edu>

Urban pests: <http://urbanentomology.tamu.edu>

Ticks: <http://ticsys.tamu.edu>

Butterflies & moths: <http://www.butterfliesandmoths.org>

General insects:

<http://insects.tamu.edu/extension/insectans/identification>

Here are some of my top picks for books on insect identification:

For Garden Insects – Texas Bug Book, Malcolm Beck & Howard Garrett

For Texas Insects – A Field Guide to Common Texas Insects, Bastiaan Drees & John Jackman

For local identification contact Molly Keck at Texas Cooperative Extension in Bexar County. You can bring live or dead insects, insect damage (to plants, wood, etc) or insect parts by the office and I will try my best to identify the insect. For those that don't have time, take a picture and mail or email it to me:

Attn: Molly Keck

3355 Cherry Ridge

Suite 212

San Antonio, TX 78230

mekeck@ag.tamu.edu

If I can't identify the insect and you need to (or really want to) know what it is, I can send a sample off to A&M for further investigation. Be warned, though: It is extremely difficult to ID insect parts, squashed insects, and dried up insects. To prevent any of the above, store insects in 70%-90% rubbing alcohol and collect more than one insect if possible.

Remember, Extension is here to help. If you have an insect you need identified, please contact us!



Ladybugs Come In from the Cold



During late fall and early winter, as the weather becomes colder, ladybugs will start to congregate in leaf litter, mulch, or any other ground cover they can find. In some cases, as the weather gets colder, the ladybugs will leave their hiding places and converge on the sides of buildings and homes.

As the ladybugs crawl around the side of the house, they will find tiny cracks and crevices, start to make their way indoors and become a major nuisance to homeowners. What was once welcomed in the garden, is now a problem indoors. The most common home invader is the Asian lady bug.

If you are noticing ladybugs along the outside of your home, and do not want an infestation indoors, you must take some precautions. Seal, caulk, and screen all available entrance areas: around windows, doors, exterior plumbing and conduit, weepholes, and other exterior cracks and crevices at least 1/16 inch in diameter.

If you already have a problem indoors, vacuuming is the best source of control. Many times, ladybugs have already infested the home and are hiding out in the attic or walls. When you turn on the heat, they start to move out of their hiding places. In these situations vacuuming is the best source of control.

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Insecticides do very little to solve the problem. Residual sprays and dusting in cracks and crevices may lead to some reduction. But when sealing and vacuuming are possible, it is more effective (and less costly) than pesticides.

