Texas A&M AgriLife Extension

TEXAS PECAN PEST MANAGEMENT NEWSLETTER

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GENERAL

The light at the end of the tunnel is getting a little brighter with harvest not that far away for some areas and varieties. For me and my few trees it is now a race between shuck split and squirrels. As mentioned in previous letter this is also an important/critical time for water needs. The crop still looks good but many areas are in dire need of a rain to finish out kernel development and help with shuck split.

INSECTS

One of, and for some producers, THE most important late season nut feeding insect is the pecan weevil. The entire pecan weevil management program is directed at one event, that being preventing females from depositing eggs in nuts, period. We can't do anything about the grubs and adults in the soil and we cannot do anything about eggs and grubs in the pecan so the only management opportunity is that time period between adult emergence and egg lay. Figure 1 shows our current distribution record of pecan weevil on pecan across Texas.

However, the records for Webb, Duval, Jim Hogg, Zavala and Frio that were entered on a survey are wrong for no weevils have been recorded from these counties.

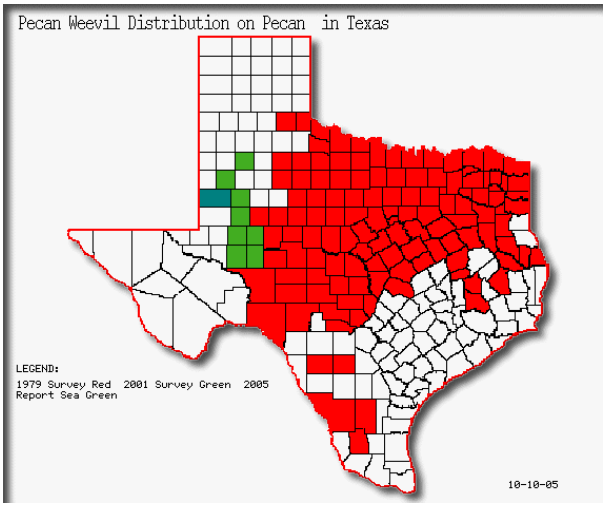

Figure 1Distribution of pecan weevil on pecan in Texas.

After two to three years duration in the soil adult weevils will begin to emerge in early August and continue until the third week of September, under ideal conditions as shown in Figure 2.

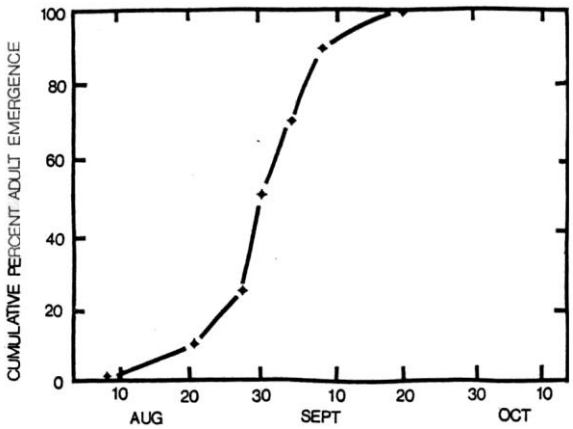

Figure 2. Normal adult pecan weevil emergence pattern

However, producers that have heavy soils under drought conditions can experience a drought

delayed emergence. An example of this delayed emergence is shown in Figure 3. In this figure you can see that adults were emerging on October 19th. Any pecans that were not at shuck split on this date were subject to pecan weevil oviposition.

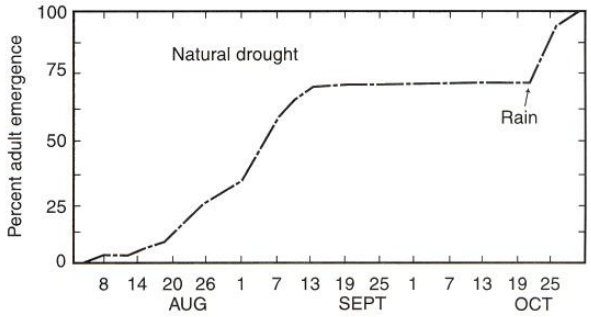

Figure 3. An example of a pecan weevil drought delayed emergence pattern

Females cannot successfully oviposit eggs in nuts until the start of dough formation so the monitoring of kernel development to determine or anticipate when kernels are susceptible to egg lay is important. This earliest formation will be a the tip, distal end, of the nut so producers need to watch kernel formation on the earliest maturing cultivars to determine when nuts are susceptible to egg lay.

I feel that producers should take notes on their weevil management activities. Anything that can relate to pecan weevil should be recorded – yields, percent damage, when damage was observed, irrigation dates or rainfall dates and amounts, insecticides used and rates, trap catches and location of traps.

Information complied over the years will give you a good look at how your program is working. And if it doesn't seem to be working then there are notes to look back on. With pecan weevils having 2 and 3 year life cycles, trying to recall from memory what happened 2 years ago can be hard. Sometimes I have a hard time remembering last week, let alone 2 years ago so notes can be important. One important number to remember is that it is approximately 42 days from ovipositon to grub emergence. If pecans are in the shop and you notice grubs emerging from sacks, look aback about 6 weeks to see what happened during that time that allowed females to oviposit in nuts.

Figure 4 Size differences of pecans from the same tree

Figure 5 Pecan section showing kernel sac only extending halfway down on August 25th

Figure 6 Pecan weevil feeding site

A good weevil management program will require at least two treatments, sometimes three. Continue to monitor adult emergence traps up through the time the latest maturing cultivars have reached shuck split. Recommended active ingredients for pecan weevil include carbaryl and bifenthrin.

Walnut Caterpillar: Third generation is just around the corner. Watch for new infestations on trees that were not defoliated from the previous generation. Unfortunately trees defoliated from the first generation will have mature foliage that will be susceptible. Defoliation at this time of year will have a severe negative impact on the crop.

STATE MEETINGS

August 29, 2014
Arizona Pecan Growers Conference
Palo Verde Holiday Inn,
Tucson, AZ
Contact: Mike Kilby @ 520-403-4613 or
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2015

January 26-30, 2015
Texas Pecan Short Course
Texas A&M University
College Station, TX

February 27-28, 2015
SEPGA Convention
Sandestin Resort,
Sandestin, FL

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