

Number 17 - October 19, 2016

### **Last Issue for 2016**

This is the last issue of the Home, Yard, and Garden Pest Newsletter for 2016. We plan to start 2017 issues around mid-April, depending on how early spring weather breaks, bringing diseases, weeds, and insect pests along with it. This issue includes an index of the articles written in the 17 issues of this year's newsletter.

Take advantage during the winter to update your knowledge and licensing by attending several of the educational sessions offered by University of Illinois Extension, professional organizations, and other entities in this and other states.  
*(Phil Nixon)*

### **Rotting Wood Borers**

There are several species of beetles and other insects that tunnel through the rotting wood common in many trees. Generally, these are discovered when a tree blows over in a windstorm, gets hit by lightning, or is cut down. These insects are commonly inaccurately blamed for the tree going into decline or causing the tree to be weakened.

Xylem, which comprises the majority of the interior of tree trunks is dead tissue. Numerous wood rot fungi take advantage of this food source. Nancy Pataky wrote an article on wood rots in this newsletter

in October 2008; it is available at <http://hyg.ipm.illinois.edu/pastpest/200819c.html>.

Hermit beetle, bessbug, and stag beetle larvae commonly take advantage of rotting wood, feeding on the wood rot fungi. They are generally unable to digest the wood itself, cellulose, but consume it to digest the fungi growing in it. These larvae are similar in appearance to the white grubs that attack turf roots, being white, elongate and thick-bodied with brown heads and three pairs of legs. They tend to be less C-shaped than white grubs and larger, commonly about two inches long when full grown.

Adults of these insects are commonly found in the rotting wood as well as the larvae. They also come to lights at night. Hermit beetles are one inch long, brown scarab beetles with flat backs. They are chunky beetles, being almost as wide as long. Bessbugs are elongate black shiny beetles about one and one-half inches long with a hook-like horn on top of the head. Newly emerged adults are brown. Stag beetles are reddish-brown to dark brown beetles. Males are about one and one-half inches long with large jaws; they are commonly called "pinching bugs." Female stag beetles are about one and one-quarter inches long with shorter jaws than the males.

Many mites and other insects are also associated with rotting wood including

oribatid mites, other scavenging mites, predatory mites, springtails, psocids, flat bark beetles, darkling beetles, checkered beetles, rove beetles, and click beetles. Rotting wood supports an entire community of fungus feeders, scavengers, and predators using the wood rot fungi as the food base and the tree for shelter, but they are there secondarily. They arrived after the tree was in decline. (*Phil Nixon*)

### **White Grubs**

White grubs continue to be a problem in Illinois due to populations rebounding from heavy mortality from droughts and deeply frozen soils in previous years. Due to unseasonably warm temperatures, soil temperatures are still very warm, ranging from the mid-60's degrees F in northern Illinois to the mid-70's in southern Illinois. These temperatures are allowing turfgrass root feeding to continue.

Annual white grubs migrate deeper into the soil when the temperature drops below 50 degrees F. Japanese beetle grubs migrate deeper when the temperature drops below 59 degrees F. If temperatures stay warm, grub damage is likely to continue to occur.

To determine whether insecticide treatment for white grubs will be effective, cut through the sod and pull it back. If grubs are present in the root zone, then treatment should be effective. If grubs are not present, they have migrated deeper and insecticides will not reach them.

To treat for white grubs at this time of year, use a quick-acting insecticide. Tri-

chlorfon (Dylox) or chlorantroniliprole (Acelepryn) is likely to be the most effective. Also, there is the possibility that turf may be able to grow roots fast enough to stay ahead of grub feeding if it has sufficient water during cooler conditions.

Providing irrigation until the soils cool enough for the grubs to migrate deeper is an option for those who wish to avoid an insecticide treatment. As a result of natural winter mortality, fewer grubs will migrate upwards to feed on this same turf in the spring. Be watchful, however, for a spring drought, which could slow down turf growth enough to allow even a few grubs to cause damage next spring. (*Phil Nixon*)

### **Seed Corn Beetle**

Seed corn beetles, *Stenolophus lecontei*, have been a problem in turf this summer, particularly on golf course greens. Seed corn beetles are about one-quarter inch long and brown to reddish-brown with black heads and two wide black stripes on the wing covers. They have long antennae.

These are ground beetles in the Family Carabidae. Ground beetles are predatory with both the larvae and adults feeding on insects and snails in the soil. Only adults are being found, apparently being attracted to lights or moisture. They tunnel into the soil, producing small, one-fourth to one inch, mounds of soil similar in appearance to castings made by earthworms. They do not appear to be causing direct damage to the turf.

Many contact insecticides are effective against them including azadirachtin (Azatin), carbaryl (Sevin), and trichlor-

fon (Dylox). However, more beetles will fly onto the course and are likely to not be controlled with the previous insecticide application. Azadirachtin has repellent properties, and there have been reports of longer lasting control with that insecticide. (*Phil Nixon*)

## **Index 2016**

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