



Nursery Cooperative MANAGEMENT ALERT 2012 - 03

START YOUR PEST MANAGEMENT SCOUTING FOR INSECTS EARLY

Entomologists are already predicting that 2012 will be a bad year for certain insects due to the mild winter. While we have no specific nursery insect forecasts, we encourage all nursery personnel to start scouting for insect problems early. Last year, Lygus bug caught at least one nursery by surprise as a result of the early spring.

Lygus or plant bugs causes “bushy-top” seedlings and is one of the first insects during the growing season that require an insecticide. Members of the Lygus genus can injure both hardwoods and conifers. Insect feeding on young conifers can severely affect seedling form. During the feeding process, Lygus bugs inject saliva into the stem that eventually causes the needle twisting and forked seedlings we associate with “bushy-top” seedlings. If you normally use the calendar to determine when you start to look for potential insect problems, throw that out the window this year and start early. If insect feeding occurs soon after germination, then the seedlings may become stunted and end up as culls.

The best place to start scouting for insect damage is by closely inspecting white and yellow flowers near your nursery bed perimeter. Lygus bugs can commonly be found on flowers of daisy fleabane, cutleaf evening primrose, common groundsel, and many Brassica species. On pine, look for stem lesions and distorted needles. The adults, about 1/4” in length, are active fliers and are attracted to irrigated and fertilized nursery crops, especially during dry periods. The nymph stage is flightless. Since there can be as many as 5 generations of adults and nymphs per season, be sure to continue your scouting and spraying efforts throughout the growing season.

April 4, 2012 • Tom Starkey

Photo Credits:

Figure 1. <http://wiki.bugwood.org/uploads/Fnp54-3.jpg>

Figure 2. Whitney Cranshaw, Colorado State University, Bugwood.org

Figure 3. Ronald Smith, Auburn University, Bugwood.org

Figure 4. <http://www.forestpests.org/nursery/lygusbugs.html>

For additional information see: South, DB. 2012. Plant Bugs. Forest Nursery Pests USDA Forest Service Agric. Handbook # 680



Figure 1. Adult feeding damage.



Figure 2. An adult Lygus bug.



Figure 3. A Lygus bug nymph.



Figure 4. Distorted needles from Lygus bug feeding.