TEXAS A&M AGRILIFE EXTENSION

Glassy-winged sharpshooters

Glassy-winged sharpshooters are large, dark colored leafhoppers. While these insects usually do not cause much damage from feeding, they are capable of transmitting the bacterial disease, *Xylella fastidiosa*. This bacterium is responsible for Pierce's disease, various forms of leaf scorch, phony peach disease, and variegated citrus chlorosis. At this time there are no cures for these diseases. When a sharpshooter feeds on an infected plant, it can get the bacteria in it's mouthparts. The bacteria can then be transferred to a different plant when it feeds again.

Glassy-winged sharpshooters are large in comparison to other leafhoppers at about ½ an inch in length. The insects are usually dark brown to black in color with clear wings that have red venation. Wings may appear brown in color due to wings folding over the brown body. Females secrete a chalky white substance before laying eggs. She transfers this substance to the upper wings, creating white spots. Once she lays eggs, she uses the chalky substance to cover eggs.

Eggs are laid in masses of about 10-12 under the lower leaf surface. They are laid in a single layer, side-by-side. Eggs look like a greenish blister below the surface of the leaf, but after the eggs hatch the leaf tissue turns brown and remains as a brown scar on the plant.

Glassy-winged sharpshooters can be found in a wide variety of habitats- from urban landscapes to cropland to woodlands- and can feed on hundreds of plant species. Plant hosts can range from woody plants to annual and perennial herbaceous plants.

The main reason for managing glassy-winged sharpshooters is to control the bacterium *Xylella*. Unfortunately, it does not take high population levels of sharpshooters for disease transmission to occur, so it is unknown if management with insecticides can help to reduce disease spread. If you feel the need to manage glassy-winged sharpshooters, try using insecticidal soaps or horticultural oils to conserve beneficial insects in the landscape.

For more information or help with identification, contact Wizzie Brown, Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service Program Specialist at 512.854.9600. Check out my blog at www.urban-ipm.blogspot.com

This work is supported by Crops Protection and Pest Management Competitive Grants Program [grant no. 2017-70006-27188 /project accession no. 1013905] from the USDA National Institute of Food and Agriculture.