

TEXAS A&M AGRI LIFE EXTENSION

Grasshoppers- start early in the season for better control

Grasshoppers can be a common sight in most yards each year. They tend to feed on various plants and in some years can occur in large numbers and lead to severe damage. It's best to start looking managing grasshoppers now while they are still small and do not have fully developed wings.

Grasshoppers lay their eggs in the soil in groups of 20-100 eggs. Eggs can be laid in ditches, fence-rows and weedy areas. Eggs begin to hatch in April- May, or sooner weather permitting, and continue hatching throughout June. Immature grasshoppers, or nymphs, resemble adults but do not have fully developed wings. It usually takes about 1-2 months for a grasshopper to reach adulthood.



Grasshoppers have natural enemies and many may die from fungus, protozoa, nematodes and predators such as beetles, robber flies, birds and small mammals.

The protozoan, *Nosema locustae*, is sometimes incorporated into a bran-based bait for grasshoppers. The baits may kill some nymphs, but have little effect on adult populations. With baiting, there is reduced egg-laying in adults, but the bait will not be helpful in areas that need immediate grasshopper control or there is high pressure of grasshoppers moving in from adjacent areas.

Plowing or turning areas before planting can help to unearth grasshopper eggs and reduce hatch rate. Controlling weeds in and around the property can help reduce food sources as well as egg laying sites.

Prized plants can be covered with row cover. Make sure the cover is firmly attached to the ground and it's on before any pests are on the plant. Pesticides may also be used for grasshopper control.

The benefit of managing grasshoppers early in the season is that immature grasshoppers are easier to kill with pesticides because they are smaller in size and they don't have wings to escape the treatment area.

Refer to the following publication for a list of non-preferred food plants:

<http://citybugs.tamu.edu/factsheets/landscape/lawns/ent-1005/>

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

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