

## Checking for Chinch Bugs -

Did the damage first appear sometime in July or August? Yes or No.

If it appeared earlier, then "No"

Is the damage restricted to or did it start in the more drought-stressed areas of your lawn? Yes or No.

e.g. in sun-exposed areas on slopes, by the curb, border next to garden beds? If so then answer "Yes".

Did the early damage appear as more or less circular patches of damaged grass that turn yellow and then brown as they die? Yes or No.

Chinch bugs like drought-stressed grass. If so then answer "Yes".

Do the patches appear to be expanding? Yes or No.

Is there more than 1/2 inch (13mm) of thatch? Yes or No.

Excess accumulation of thatch is a natural habitat for chinch bugs.

Does the dead grass pull up easily? Yes or No.

If the answers to the above were mostly YES, then chinch bugs could be responsible for the damage.

Other questions to consider -

Do you water the lawn, but not faithfully, or do it frequently for short intervals? Yes or No.

If Yes, that could be a factor actually stimulating water stress and chinch bugs.

Do you mow shorter than 2.5 inches during the summer?

If yes, this is a big factor in water stress, which encourages chinch bugs.

Do you fertilize several times per year?

If yes, some savings are almost certainly possible. High fertilizer use favors accumulation of excess thatch (which is habitat for chinch) and increases the thirst of grass for water, making it prone to water stress.

**Licensed • Bonded • Insured  
Service You Can Trust!**

For more  
information  
call . . .

**Nuisance<sup>TM</sup>  
News!**



Fact Sheet

Your Company Name

Address

City , State Zip

Phone Number(s)



There are  
several  
different  
Chinch  
Bugs



## Chinch Bugs

These insects feed on many kinds of lawn grasses, but St. Augustine grass is a favorite. Both the adults and the nymphs suck the juices out of the blades. At the same time, they inject a poison that causes the blades to turn brown and die. Heavy infestations may completely kill a lawn in several days. These sun and heat loving insects seldom attack shady lawns.

## Life Cycles and Habits



The hairy chinch bug adults overwinter in the thatch and bases of grass stems in the turf. However, the common chinch bug prefers to move to tall bunch-grasses in open fields to find overwintering sites. These individuals then migrate in search of grain crops in the spring but may establish in turf instead. The adults of both species become active when the daytime temperatures reach 70° F. The females feed for a short period of time and mate when males are encountered. Eventually the females begin to lay eggs by inserting them into the folds of grass blades or into the thatch. This usually occurs from mid-April into June. A single female may lay up to 200 eggs over 60-80 days. The eggs take about 20-30 days to hatch at temperatures below 70° F, but can hatch in a little as a week when above 80° F. The young nymphs begin to feed by inserting their mouthparts in grass stems, usually while under a leaf sheath. The nymphs grow slowly at the beginning of the season because of cool temperatures but speed their development by July. Usually the first generation matures by mid-July. At this time considerable numbers of adults and larger nymphs can be seen walking about on sidewalks or crawling up the sides of light colored buildings. If a good, hot/dry spring is available, turf injury by the first generation can be evident by June. Damage may be visible from late-June through August when the spring generation mature nymphs and adults are feeding and the second generation of nymphs are becoming active. During the hot summer months, the new females lay eggs rapidly and their young may mature by the end of August into September. The second generation adults may lay a few eggs for a partial third generation if the season has been long. However, most of these late nymphs do not mature before winter temperatures drop. When cool temperatures arrive, the mature chinch bugs seek out protected areas to spend the winter.

## Host



Chinch bugs attack a variety of forage, lawn and wild grasses. The principal crop plants damaged are wheat, corn, sorghum, oats, etc.

Chinch bugs are most damaging to St. Augustine grass. You may see them on grasses such as Zoysia, Bermuda and Centipede, but infestations usually occur where high populations have built up on St. Augustine grass. Left uncontrolled, large areas of lawn may die.

Chinch bugs are nothing to be ignored. They can leave your lawn devastated and ruin the appearance of your entire landscape. Many times, turf thinning from chinch bugs results not in turf loss, but infiltration of wild grasses and weeds. This can also destroy your lawn's appearance.

A dry lawn creates weak turf and moisture stressed areas, which draw chinch bug activity. If you notice footprints or leaf blades folding with a grayish appearance when walking across your lawn, it is time to water. Three quarters of an inch, twice weekly will suffice.

## Problem

The grass wilts, turns yellowish brown, dries out and dies in sunny areas along sidewalks and driveways.

## Descriptions

Adult chinch bug, *Blissus leucopterus* are about 4 mm long and black with opaque wings. The wings vary in length, from as long as the body to 1/3 to 1/2 the length of the body and each bears a distinctive, triangular, black mark. The



wingless nymph is smaller than but similar in shape to the adult. The head and thorax are brown; the eyes are dark red; and the abdomen is pale yellow or light red with a black tip.

## Nymphs

The young chinch bugs (called nymphs) develop into adults in four to six weeks. Nymphs are yellow upon hatching but soon turn red and have a light colored band across their abdomens. With each molt, nymphs more closely resemble the adults.

## How do chinch bugs invade?



Mostly by walking. But chinch bugs also fly, which is seen rarely. Chinch bugs are one of the most damaging insect pests to your yard. A thorough inspection by a pest control specialist is the best way to determine if chinch bugs are present and if so, how to gain control. Poisons, if necessary, should be carefully chosen and applied in a manner which will kill the chinch bugs without endangering beneficial insects, pets or humans. If you suspect that chinch bugs are destroying the beauty of your lawn give us a call before the conditions gets worse.

**For more information on these and the other pests call . . .**  
**Your company phone here**