

2019 Insects

by Andy Luke, MU Extension Agronomy Specialist

Two weeks ago, I talked about new diseases that may show up in Missouri crop fields in 2019. Growers should also be on the lookout for insect pests that may also show up in Missouri for the first time this year. Orange Gall Midge in soybeans is a relatively new pest, with injury first being reported in South Dakota in 2015. Appearing originally as small, white larvae, the gall midge turns bright red or orange as it matures. The larvae feed inside the stem, causing swelling and abnormal growth near the soil surface. The soybean plant will have dark brown markings on its stem, and will snap off easily near the ground, revealing the white or orange midge larvae. Most gall midge damage is noticed in soybean plants that are showing symptoms of damage or disease, with injury generally more severe along field edges. Because it is usually found in damaged fields, it is not known whether the orange gall midge causes significant damage or whether it is a secondary pest. Treatment with insecticides is not recommended because control is unlikely for the larvae that are protected while feeding inside the stem.

An additional insect that may soon show up in Missouri fields is the Spotted Lanternfly. This insect was first reported in the U.S. in Pennsylvania in 2014 and has slowly spread since then. Native to Asia, the Spotted Lanternfly will feed on corn, soybeans, fruits and ornamental trees. Extensive damage could also occur in grapes, one of the lanternfly's primary hosts. This insect feeds on the sap of plants, leaving a black or gray trail along the stem or bark. It also excretes honeydew, which attracts bees and other insects and can serve as a growing medium for fungi such as sooty mold that can stunt a plants growth. An adult spotted lanternfly is gray with black spots on its forewing, with bright red and white underwings visible when its wings are spread. Although it resembles a moth, its distinct markings can help identify this pest. If you see a spotted lanternfly, please do not destroy it. Instead, record where you found it then trap it in a sealed container and submit it to your local Extension office.

For more information, you can contact me at the Harrison County Extension Center, (660) 425-6434 or by email at lukea@missouri.edu.

(written 1/25/19)