

Orange Gall Midge

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Reports from Nebraska, Minnesota and Iowa indicate that orange gall midge are showing up in soybean fields in these states. This pest has never been reported in the state, but its close proximity across state lines mean it is likely present in fields in Missouri.

Orange Gall Midge, sometimes referred to as soybean gall midge, is a relatively new pest, first being found in Nebraska in 2011, with first damage 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 of soybeans, causing swelling and abnormal growth near the soil surface. The soybean plant will have dark brown markings on its stem, resembling some stem diseases. It will then 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.

To scout for orange gall midge in your soybeans, look for field edges with wilting or dying soybean plants. It's likely that the midges will appear in fields that were in or border fields planted to soybeans last year. Check to see if the stems of the damaged plants appear brittle or have dark discolorations near the ground. If so, snap off the plant near the soil surface and you should be able to see the white or orange maggots feeding inside the darkened portions of the stem. Very little is known about this pest's biology, and even less is known about control measures. If you suspect orange gall midge is present in your soybean field, please contact your local University of Missouri Extension office.