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May 25, 2012

12-3

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GENERAL

I am still seeing a very good crop but I am also beginning to see some “June drop”. Overall we are still in good shape but with high winds and temperatures reaching the 90’s and 100 + mark we are back to needing some good rains.

INSECTS

Pecan nut casebearer: First generation PNC pretty much came and went without much damage, but there were a few sites / orchards that would have had a loss without a treatment. If crops are still very good to heavy after the June drop I don’t feel that any treatment will be needed for the second generation.

Pheromone traps can still be used to monitor second generation activity and eggs can still be found around the tip or stigma end of the nutlet.

Golden headed weevil: I have received a few inquiries recently concerning the golden headed weevil, *Compsus auricephalus*, feeding on pecan foliage. This insect feeds on plant foliage and is not considered an economic pest of pecan. Movement in to pecan canopies might be the result of herbicide treatments applied under trees or other food hosts drying up.



Figure 1. Golden headed weevil

Walnut caterpillar: Starting around the middle of May I began receiving emails concerning walnut caterpillar activity in Victoria and DeWitt counties.

Although there are these isolated or localized areas of walnut caterpillar activity every year in Texas, it has been a long time (early and mid 70’s) since there was a major state wide infestation and we keep wondering if “this“ year will be the next major outbreak. Because this insect has the potential to go from almost undetectable populations in one generation to major outbreaks in the next, the importance of monitoring and awareness cannot be over stated.

The walnut caterpillar is a foliage feeder of trees in the family Juglandaceae which includes the hickories and walnuts and here in Texas this insect can have two or three generations. Based on

developmental times with 245 frost free days being an approximate dividing line between areas that could have two or three generations.

Infestations start with female moths depositing egg masses which may contain 300 – 900+ eggs on the undersides of individual leaflets of mature foliage and it is believed that a single female will deposit only one egg mass in her life. Unlike fall webworm where egg masses can be deposited in layers and will be covered with “fuzz”, walnut caterpillar egg masses will be in one layer and free of any covering. Eggs will take approximately 10 – 12 days to mature and larval feeding will be approximately 23 days before larvae leave the tree to seek pupation sites.



Figure 2 Walnut caterpillar egg mass

Walnut caterpillars feed in a colony and do not construct a web so initial infestations can be easily overlooked. Early indications of an infestation might be frass or dropping on the orchard floor or in town on sidewalks and driveways. Branch terminals with missing foliage but retained leaf rachis are other signs of an active infestation. When the fourth instar molts, the colony molts as a group on the main trunk or a scaffold limb leaving behind a mass of cast skins and this is another indication that there are active larvae still feeding within the canopy. The emerging 5th and last instar larvae now feed as individuals and it is during this last instar is when most of the feeding damage occurs. When the last instar finishes feeding

larvae will leave the tree in search of pupation sites.

Parasites, predators and disease are some of the main factors that help keep populations in check. Another factor that can influence succeeding generations is that females seem to seek out “mature: foliage for oviposition sites. If a preceding generation has caused a significant amount of defoliation, the resulting new growth does not seem suitable for reinfestation and the next generation can crash.



Figure 3 Colony of 4th instar larvae



Figure 4 5th instar larvae

MEETINGS/EDUCATIONAL EVENTS

The following are meetings and events that I'm aware of at this time:

State/Regional Pecan Meetings

June 14-15, 2012

Tri-State Pecan Growers Conference
(LA, AR, MS)
Natchitoches, LA
Contact: Stephen Norman @ 318-448-3130

June 21- 23, 2012

Oklahoma Pecan Growers Conference
Norman, OK
Contact: 580-796-7644 or
OKpecan@trinex.net

July 15 – 18, 2012

Texas Pecan Growers Conference and Trade Show
Embassy Suites
San Marcos, TX
Contact: TPGA @ 979-846-3285

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