



Arkansas Fruit and Nut News Volume 6, Issue 7, 20 August 2016

Pecan Pests

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- **Pecan Weevils.** The pecan weevil is the most devastating pest to pecans if not controlled. Adults should be emerging soon (**Fig. 1 left**). The larvae can feed inside nuts after water stage (**Fig. 2**). Now is the time to monitor for pecan weevil adults by tying Circle traps around pecan trunks or setting out pyramid traps. If trap catches equal greater than 1 weevil per trap per day then an insecticide treatment is recommended see the MP144 for insecticide recommendations.
- **Hickory shuckworms** will become present in pecan groves over the next few weeks. These caterpillars feed primarily on hickory and pecan. The larvae mostly feed inside of the shuck reducing the nut quality and yield. The second generation of the shuckworm actually feeds inside the nut causing nuts to drop. Inspect fallen nuts for shuckworm and remove/destroy fallen nuts and shucks.
- **Stink bugs** mainly damage pecans during and after water stage (**Fig. 2**), which for many varieties including ‘Pawnee’ and ‘Kanza’ is beginning now or in the next few weeks. The stink bug damage is not noticeable on the outside of the shuck but when the pecan is cracked it leaves a dark bitter tasting pit (spot) on the kernel. This damage greatly reduces pecan quality. Yellow or black pyramid traps can be used to monitor the movement of stink bugs into pecan orchards. If a noticeable amount of stink bugs are present in the pecan trees or traps see the MP144 for recommendations for insecticide control.
- **Walnut caterpillar** eggs have been found and the second generation is beginning hatch. These caterpillars feed as a group as they defoliate branches on pecan, black walnut, butternut, hickory, oak, willow, birch, honey locust and apple (**Fig. 1 right**). You can see egg masses on underside of leaves (**Fig. 1 center**) and later you can see two color phases of caterpillars: smaller caterpillars are red with white lines along body and a black head whereas larger caterpillars are black with white lines along body, fuzzy white hair and a black head.
- **Fall webworm** caterpillars second generation is about to come out. A group of caterpillars cover a branch in a silk nest and defoliate the branch. They feed on pecan, apple, walnut, persimmon, birch and other trees. Webworm should be removed by pruning out and destroying nests when they first appear or an insecticide application when the nest and caterpillars are still small. Insecticide treatments will not be effective once the nest has expanded and caterpillars are large. Webworm can cause economic damage by defoliating trees. Younger trees should be watched closely for webworm and infestations. The damage is not as severe to older trees but should still be monitored.
- **Pecan scab and powdery mildew** pressure is higher this year compared to previous years (**Fig. 3**). Remember to continue your fungicide spray program especially after this wet week in August. Pecan scab can drastically reduce kernel quality and cause the shuck to stick to the shell during the shelling process.

For a list of fungicides consult the MP 154. It is important to rotate between FRAC numbers to decrease resistance development.



Figure 1. Male and female pecan weevil (left) and walnut caterpillar egg mass (center) and defoliation of pecan (right) (Photos: B. Cowell)



Photo by J.Lee, University of Arkansas

Figure 2: 'Kanza' pecan nut at water stage and beginning to fill kernel on 19th August 2016 in Central Arkansas.



Photo by J.Lee, University of Arkansas

Figure 3. Pecans infected with pecan scab (black spots) and powdery mildew (gray areas).

Much of the information obtained for this newsletter was gathered by the authors at the University of Arkansas-Fayetteville. All chemical information is given with the understanding that no endorsement of named products is intended nor is criticism implied of similar products that are not mentioned. Before purchasing or using any pesticide, always read and carefully follow the directions on the container label. Compiled by: Donn T. Johnson, University of Arkansas, Department of Entomology, E-mail: dtjohnso@uark.edu and Jackie Lee, Department of Horticulture, E-mail: jalee@uaex.edu.

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