



Leafhoppers

Several species
Order Hemiptera, Family Cicadellidae; leafhoppers
Native pests

Pest information: Turf grasses, blade sucking nymphs and adults.

Description: A number of species can be found in turf. During some seasons these very tiny green or gray insects become so numerous that when disturbed into flight, they rise like a cloud of dust. Most of the grass-infesting leafhoppers are less than 6 mm long, narrow, and tapered from head to tail.

Life history: Populations arrive as annual flights from southern populations. Eggs are inserted into leaf tissue. There are many generations in a summer.

Overwintering: Do not overwinter in Northern states.

Damage symptoms: Leafhoppers are sap-sucking insects, and their damage usually appears as irregular patches in which the grass has yellowed or bleached-out lesions. Established lawns are seldom seriously damaged. Eggs hatch in one to two weeks, and the young nymphs begin to suck on grass blades.

Monitoring: Thresholds are not well established.

Cultural control: Maintain healthy grass by fertilizing in the spring and fall and watering during periods of drought.

Chemical control: Not a major pest of turf though large populations may be noted during the summer months. Considered a nuisance pest. Do not use broad spectrum insecticides routinely, as they will do more harm than good and will kill the beneficial insects that live in the turf, which can cause pest outbreaks. Control is suggested for new lawns or lawns with damage.

Biological control: Carabid ground beetles, staphylinid rove beetles, ants, spiders. Spiders are major predators of leafhoppers.

Plant Mortality Risk: Low

Biorational pesticides: None

Conventional pesticides: acephate, bifenthrin, carbaryl, chlorpyrifos, deltamethrin



Leafhopper adult on turfgrass. (W31)
Photo: Whitney Cranshaw



Leafhopper nymph; note the wingbuds. (283)
Photo: Mark Ascerno