



# INSECTS AND WEEDS IN FOCUS

Web site: <http://entowww.tamu.edu>

<http://agfacts.tamu.edu/~rparker/>

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## FALL ARMYWORM & STRIPED GRASS LOOPER PERSIST IN GRASS CROPS

Fall armyworm (FAW) along with striped grass looper (SGL) continue to infest all kinds of grass crops in southern Texas especially along the Gulf Coast. They seem more likely to be found in recently planted sorghum, corn, and improved pastures. Normally, the SGL has occurred in relatively low numbers compared with FAW, but heavy infestations by the species were recently reported by Noel Troxclair, Extension Entomologist, at Uvalde. If mild conditions continue through the time small grain crops emerge, one or both of these species might become a problem. Plan now to scout for these caterpillars every week from the time crops emerge until very cool weather. Continuing to scout other grass crops should be a priority due to the many infestations that have been reported over the past two months. More insecticide options exist for the small grain, sorghum, and corn crops than we have listed for pastures.

Noel Troxclair provided the pictures (Fig. 1) showing the feeding habit of SGL, which is unlike the FAW. The FAW tends to cause more holes in the center of leaves whereas the SGL gouges out large areas on broad leaves such as found on corn. The difference in feeding is not as apparent on forage grass.

Slightly over 20% of the FAW armyworms collected from corn southeast of Flatonia in Lavaca County were infected with the fungi probably *Nomuraea rileyi*. This fungus has been known to eliminate FAW before they cause excessive damage. See the photograph (by Gary N. Odvody, Research Plant Pathologist) showing the fungus on FAW (Fig. 2). RDP



Fig. 1. Striped grass loopers and damage.



Fig. 2. Fungus on fall armyworm, Lavaca County 2007.

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## PINK HIBISCUS MEALYBUG FOUND IN TEXAS

Much correspondence has been received over the past ten days dealing with the **pink hibiscus mealybug** (PHM). It was first discovered in the United States in 2002 in Florida but was recently discovered on plants at Port Aransas. The mealybug is potentially a serious pest of many ornamental and agricultural crops. Attached is more information about the insect. Note that there are predators and parasitoids that have been effective in reducing damage from PHM. More information is available on the website listed on the publication. RDP

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## ANNOUNCING THE SOUTH TEXAS FARM & RANCH SHOW

The show will be in Victoria, October 24-25; this will be the 26<sup>th</sup> year for the show. See the attached schedule for more information. Note that there will be a special luncheon requiring purchase of tickets by October 22. The meal will be a 12 ounce Prime+ Ribeye Akaushi steak. Look it up on your computer search engine to see the special characteristics of this type steak. The show's cost for the meal is \$25, but sponsor support was obtained to offset the cost so tickets can be purchased for \$12. RDP

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## CARIBBEAN CRAZY ANT FOUND AT EL CAMPO

The Caribbean crazy ant (suspected species) is an invasive species which until now was found only in the Houston area. It has been detected (not yet confirmed) at El Campo where it is causing many problems due to the very high numbers encountered in homes, automobiles, buildings, and other places. This ant often causes great annoyance primarily due to their great numbers. The ant does not have a stinger, but they can bite, causing a relatively sharp but quickly fading pain. Even though the ant can bite, it does not seem to be an aggressive biter. The ant is very difficult to control. It has been suggested that Termidor (perimeter treatment), Top Choice (lawns), and Phantom (inside baseboards) be used by homeowners.

For more information on the Caribbean crazy ant go to the website: [http://urbanentomology.tamu.edu/ants/exotic\\_tx.cfm](http://urbanentomology.tamu.edu/ants/exotic_tx.cfm). RDP

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For more information contact:

Roy D. Parker  
Extension Entomologist  
10345 Agnes, Corpus Christi, TX 78406  
(361) 265-9203, Fax (361) 265-9434



## COTTON STALK DESTRUCTION DATES

The Texas Department of Agriculture several weeks ago extended the deadline for cotton destruction in zone 2 areas 1, 2, and 3 until October 1. Counties included in the extension through September 30 include Duval, Webb, Jim Wells, Kleberg, Nueces, northern Kenedy, Aransas (except that part already with an October 1 deadline), San Patricio, Bee, and Live Oak.

Normal stalk destruction deadline dates currently remain unchanged to the north of the counties listed above.

Extensions beyond the dates for your area can be applied for with forms available at TDA's website, our office, or most County Extension Agent offices. RDP

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## SOME GROUND LOST IN SOUTH TEXAS/WINTERGARDEN BOLL WEEVIL ERADICATION PROGRAM

For most of the 2007 cotton growing season boll weevil numbers were lower than in past years. However, with extended rainfall, difficulties in inspecting traps, and the extended growing season, boll weevil numbers are quite high in many fields in Kleberg, Jim Wells, Uvalde, and several other counties. There are also some "hot" fields scattered in other places. The good news is that there are still many fields where no boll weevils have been found to date in 2007. It is critical that complete stalk destruction be carried out as quick as possible in all locations regardless whether boll weevils have been detected in the area. RDP

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## INTERESTING INSECTS

Chewing lice live on the bodies of birds and mammals, from the hummingbird to the elephant. They eat feathers, hair, scales, and fatty matter from the sebaceous glands of the skin. Occasionally a few species will take blood from wounds or from the base of young feathers. These lice are very host specific with most species being found on one species of bird or mammal. Chewing lice dwell on different parts of their hosts. On mammals they usually are found on the neck, nape, around the horns, or around the tail. On birds they are found mostly under the wings and on the head and neck. If two or more species are found on one host they occupy distinct, separated regions. Finally, lice cannot "jump" since they are not equipped with legs for that activity. RDP

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View our newsletter earlier on the internet at <http://agfacts.tamu.edu/~rparker>. Also pest management information is available at [www.txaac.org](http://www.txaac.org).

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