



FALSE CHINCH BUG



The homeowner or gardener living next to vacant lots or fields may be alarmed to find the ground swarming with minute, active, grayish to reddish brown bugs which usually appear in late spring or early summer. When swarming in large numbers, it appears that the ground is moving, usually in one direction. These insects are often found to be the False Chinch Bug. They are usually one of two species, *Nysius ericae*, or more commonly in California, *Nysius raphanus*. The adult bugs average about one-eighth inch long and one-twelfth inch wide with a dull gray body, mostly dark beneath, and half covered with whitish, translucent wings. The young (nymphs) are smaller and wingless or with tiny wing pads, and have a reddish brown abdomen.

HABITS AND DAMAGE

These bugs do not bite or sting and as far as is known do not carry disease. It then becomes largely a problem of seeing masses of minute, swarming bugs which may accidentally enter the house. In the late winter or early spring the females deposit their eggs in the surface cracks in the soil, around weed and grass areas. When the young hatch, they feed almost exclusively on grasses and weeds. When warm weather occurs in the spring, the weeds dry up or mature and the bugs scatter to plants around the home, and congregate in large numbers. Plants on which the bugs remain may be sucked almost dry and wilt. Fortunately, as the bugs finish their feeding and become adults, they will usually disperse within a few days to two weeks and will not reappear unless the same habitat is present next spring.

CONTROL

Infestations of False Chinch Bugs may be prevented by chemical treatment of vacant areas with herbicides to prevent growth of weeds and grasses, or by discing and destroying weeds early in the spring before they become a fire hazard. When swarming starts, keep the

grass along the edge of the lot and around the house watered down to the point of leaving puddles. Wash paved areas and water lawns frequently.

Insecticides are not satisfactory unless used over a wide area. Many insecticides will kill the bugs on contact, but during the swarming stages this gives only temporary control as more bugs keep moving in to replace the dead. Look for the words "False Chinch Bugs" on the label and follow the label directions. Treat at least a 25 foot barrier strip if possible. Treatment in early morning or on cool days when the bugs are least active is most effective. Mechanical destruction of the weeds when dry usually serves to disperse the bugs faster. Spraying unwanted vegetation with weed oil will destroy many of these insects.

CAUTION

Handle pesticides with care. Read all precautionary labeling and follow mixing directions exactly. Apply only in amounts specified. Do not use near open flame or exposed foods. Clean food preparation areas after use of pesticides. Store pesticides in original labeled containers in a locked cabinet or shed, out of reach of children and pets. Properly dispose of container when empty so that they pose no hazard to humans or animals. See label for disposal instructions. **Never burn pesticide containers.**

No endorsement of trade names is intended nor is criticism implied of similar products not mentioned. If additional help is needed, contact with a licensed pest control operator is suggested.

MOSQUITO and VECTOR MANAGEMENT DISTRICT

of Santa Barbara County

DISTRICT OFFICE: 2450 Lillie Ave. * MAIL: P.O. Box 1389

Summerland, CA 93067

TELEPHONE: (805) 969-5050 * E-MAIL: mvmdistrict@mvmdistrict.org

Take a look at our Public Information Website: www.mvmdistrict.org