

## Lawn Insects

By: Melinda Sperl

Southern lawns are really struggling with our 100 degree heat. It was really important to make sure your lawn was healthy going into the summer months as a stressed lawn is like a party invitation to insects.



Sod Webworm is our newest threat to the Houston area grasses. The beneficial insects that used to keep them in check have been killed off by insecticides and Sod Webworm is destroying our lawns at a surprising speed. When walking on your lawn, look for small moths to fly up around your feet. This moth is the nymph which lays eggs in the lawn, and then the caterpillars eat the roots of the grass. When they eat the roots they keep moving to fresh areas so if you wait until the grass turns brown, you could lose your entire lawn before you know you are infested.

Chinch bugs are very hard to see in the grass. An irregular shaped brown patch on the lawn is usually the first indication of infestation. To look for them, you can take a soup can, open both ends and hammer half the can in the ground. Do this on a part of the grass that is still green as they have moved on from the brown area. Fill the can with water and if chinch bugs are present, they will float to the top. We have attached a picture to see what they look like.



These two insects require different strengths of insecticide so it is very important that you properly diagnose the insect and read the label directions of any product you purchase. As an example, insecticides to treat ants very probably will not kill lawn insects.

Hiring a professional can save you a lot of money with prevention and proper treatment to stop them from spreading. Remember, these insects kill your grass very fast!

Happy Gardening!

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