

## Warm Weather Insects

By: Melinda Sperl

It used to be that all we had to worry about in our grass were Chinch bugs and Brown Patch. Now our lawns are infested with Sod Webworms. These insects not only infest St Augustine lawns but can also travel to Bermuda lawns. If you notice beige moths about ¼" long that fly up from your lawn you probably have them. These mature moths lay eggs in the green grass areas and those eggs grow into larvae that eat the roots of the grass. I actually met with a customer last week that had a landscaper tell her that it was not worth treating her grass because her neighbors had them too and they would just come back. The problem with that advice is that if she did not treat it immediately her entire lawn would be gone in a month. Not advice I would suggest following.

Another insect currently infesting our area is the Woolly Oak Aphid. Except for its unsightly appearance, it is not generally a harmful insect. However, it looks as if someone put white cotton candy in the neighborhood oak trees and it will spread from tree to tree. The good thing with this insect is that if the trees are not too large you can simply use a high-powered water hose to wash away the webbings. If you decide to leave them alone, the insects will die in our first freeze.

Please make sure you do not confuse Woolly Oak Aphids with Bark Lice. Bark Lice resemble fine webbing covering the trunk of the tree only and they do not touch the leaves. This is actually a beneficial insect cleaning your tree and you should not attempt to remove it. Be happy each time you see it!

Happy Gardening!

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