

Fast Fonz Facts Holiday Edition

4 July 2018

In this issue: AGB adults, SBAs, & WBC moths arrive in time to see fireworks

Asiatic garden beetles (& also Japanese & False Japanese beetles) pupated and are emerging as adults, i.e. grub damage has ended.

*In AGB infested fields, the main damage seems to be the stunting of plants. The stage is similar across the field, but damaged plants or areas are much shorter.

*Another current sign of AGB is a large number of dead beetles on the soil surface.

*Beetles are moving around the landscape on warm nights. Marehail, ragweed, lambsquarters, and Queen Anne's Lace may show signs of adult feeding on the lower leaves, and beetles are underneath the plants during the day. We have found a few cases of spectacular congregations under weeds. See the attached pdf for pictures.

Soybean aphid may be present in the earliest planted (late April, 1st week of May) fields that were not seed treated. Later-planted field are not yet infested, having escaped aphid movement out of the overwintering sites.

* Infestations often start on the windward edges of fields where aphids encounter a green/ brown interface. In Michigan, it is common for natural enemies - both predators and parasitoids - to recruit quickly from tree lines, ditch banks, and maturing wheat fields to these early infestations. As long as plants grow quickly, the infestations usually disappear or remain low if beneficials can keep up.

* Don't panic or spray these early infestations. Past experience showed that spraying aphids early did not result in a yield difference at the end of the season (the 'sweet spot' for aphid spraying is typically end of July). And we very much want to avoid unnecessary sprays that trigger the formation of resistant aphid populations, as is happening in the western states.

My first **western bean cutworm moth** of the season emerged on July 1, from a bucket buried in my garden last fall.

*This week, look for the first catches in bucket traps in the state [see WBC trapping network at <https://www.cornpest.ca/wbc-trap-network/>].

*Corn stage is extremely variable in some locations, especially in the southern counties, where an early-planted pretassel field may be adjacent to June-planted ankle-high corn. The earliest planted fields approaching pretassel stage will merit scouting in a few weeks once flight picks up in the bucket traps. I am not sure if variability across the landscape is a good or bad thing as far as predicting WBC infestation. It probably depends on the scale of the variability in your area (variable fields side by side, vs entire neighborhoods planted early or late) and the distance females can move. On one hand, if a female can find pretassel corn fields for an extended period in an area, she can disperse her eggs across a bunch of fields and that could reduce the overall level in a single field. But if one field is the single pretassel garden spot in a neighborhood, that field may get hammered with egg laying. Further, if female cannot find pretassel corn (for ex, in an area with widespread rains in May), she may dump eggs onto V-stage corn. This is dead end because larvae can't survive on leaf tissue alone; they need tassel and silks to survive.

*This all just means that trapping moths locally, then scouting for egg masses once trap catch peaks, is very important to determine if any fields are actually over threshold and merit a spray. If this does occur, my recommendation (aligned w/ that of Ontario) is to optimize spray timing for the FUNGICIDE portion of the tank mix, giving up a little bit on insect control.

* Remember, only one Bt trait, the Vip toxin, controls WBC. All other traits have little impact. That means most Bt corn acres in Michigan should be managed like non-Bt corn, for the purposes of WBC.

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