

Fact sheet

Chinch bug

What is Chinch bug?

The Chinch bug (*Blissus leucopterus*) is a native insect of North America. Under hot, dry and sunny spring/summer conditions this species can become a serious pest of cultivated grass, sorghum and corn crops.

What does it look like?

Adult Chinch bugs are black with reddish legs and milky white wings. They are 4 mm in length with a black triangular spot at the middle of their outer wing margin.

Immature (nymph) Chinch bugs resemble adults in shape but are red to reddish-orange when first hatched, turning brown to black in colour, developing a white band across their backs as they mature. Chinch bugs tend to aggregate and cluster in groups on individual host plants.

What can it be confused with?

Chinch bugs can be confused with the False chinch bug (*Nysius raphanus*) that is also not present in Australia. However, the adult False chinch bug is slightly smaller (3 mm), grey-brown in colour and more narrow bodied with a wide host range (including weeds and sorghum later in the season).

What should I look for?

Both adult and immature Chinch bugs suck sap from stems and underground plant parts, weakening plants. During the seedling stage, Chinch bugs are often found near or below the soil line and behind leaf collars, with small plants most susceptible to injury. Older plants may display reddish feeding marks behind leaf sheaths and reddish or yellowish streaking on the leaves. Stunting and lodging are common signs of Chinch bug damage. Severely damaged plants may die or present wilted or dead leaves at the growing point are further symptoms.



Chinch bug damage on sorghum

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Chinch bug nymph instars and adult

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Chinch bug damage on sorghum seedlings

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Chinch bug damage on sorghum seedlings

How does it spread?

Adults possess wings and at harvest migrate to other areas by crawling or flying (depending on stage of development). Immature Chinch bugs are flightless and move locally via 'en masse' migration to neighbouring fields.

Where is it now?

Chinch bug is present in North, Central and South America. Chinch bug is not present in Australia.

How can I protect my farm from Chinch bug?

Check your crops frequently for the presence of new pests and unusual symptoms. Make sure you are familiar with common sorghum or maize/corn insect pests so you can tell if you see something different.



Landscape New Brunswick Sustainable Turf Manual

Diagram showing all nymph instars and adults, with predator and size reference

If you see anything unusual, call the Exotic Plant Pest Hotline



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