

# PLANT DISEASE AND INSECT ADVISORY



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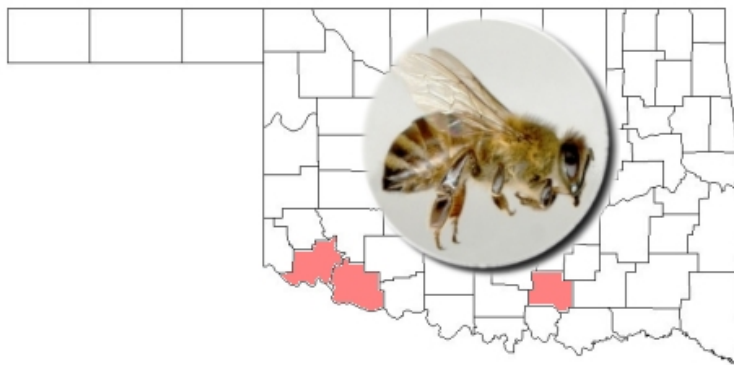
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## Africanized Honey Bee Update

**Richard Grantham, Entomologist-Dir., PDIDL and  
Phil Mulder, Extension Entomologist**



The verdict is finally in! Today we received the first of two reports back from the USDA-ARS bee identification laboratory in Tucson - the sample was confirmed (100% probability) as Africanized honey bees (AHB). As reported earlier, this sample was from Tillman County and the bees were involved in a serious stinging incident when a work crew was clearing a storm-

damaged tree in Tipton. Seven members of the work crew were treated at a local hospital. We are expecting results from the second sample also collected near Tipton shortly.

Two additional locations have also tested positive for AHB since the first state report – Altus (Jackson Co.) and south of Milburn (Johnston Co.). Both samples were verified using PCR, but due to the small number of bees from Milburn only the Altus sample will be sent to the USDA for confirmation.

Oklahoma Department of Agriculture, Food, and Forestry have established an AHB task force headed by Doug Dear. They will be responsible for collecting and eradicating suspect AHB colonies. You can contact Doug at (405) 205-2699. As we have emphasized before, do not attempt to collect bees without the proper training or equipment!

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## Fall Armyworm Problems in Pasture

**Tom A. Royer, Extension Entomologist**

Fall armyworm infestations have been seen in bermuda pastures in southern Oklahoma and eastern Texas. Outbreaks occur infrequently, but with the right weather conditions (cool, wet summers), they can build up and cause problems in pastures, particularly fescue pastures, as well as golf courses and lawns. While it is difficult to predict whether these reports signal the beginning of a widespread outbreak, producers should be on the lookout for this insect until we get a killing frost. We easily could see another generation of caterpillars later unless weather conditions and natural enemies knock them back.

Fall armyworms are surface dwelling "climbing cutworm" caterpillars. They get their name because they occur in greater numbers in the fall, and often "march" in large numbers to their next meal. Small larvae do not eat through the leaf tissue, but instead, scrape off all of the green tissue and leave a clear membrane that gives the leaf a "window pane" appearance. Larger larvae can feed voraciously on newly emerged leaves, chewing completely through them. Full-grown larvae pupate in the soil, and will emerge as a moth in 2 weeks.

Mature fall armyworms measure 1½ inches long. Their body color can range from green, to brown to black. When looking for them, pay particular attention to their head capsule and the presence of a prominent inverted white "y" on its head. Scout for fall armyworms by examining plants in several locations within the field. Look for leaves that



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## **Fall Armyworms May Visit Problem in Turf**

**Tom A. Royer, Extension Entomologist**

I have received reports of some fall armyworm infestations occurring in southeastern Oklahoma as well as eastern Texas. I would like to elaborate on fall armyworm management for turf.

Fall armyworms are surface dwelling "climbing cutworm" caterpillars. They get their name because they tend to occur in greater numbers in the fall, and they like to "march" in large numbers from meal to meal. Fall armyworms prefer to eat grasses, and often go unnoticed until they become large. By then, they are large enough to literally destroy a field of grass "overnight". They seem to prefer tall fescue but will also feed on Bermudagrass and other turf. We could continue to see infestations occur until we experience a "killing frost".



Fall armyworms can be detected through close examination of the lawn, or by using a "soap flush." A soap flush simply involves mixing about 2 tablespoons of dishwashing soap into a gallon of water. Pour the soapy water over several small areas in your lawn and wait for 30 seconds to one minute. Any larvae that are hidden in the thatch will become irritated by the soap and come to the surface of the lawn. If 3-4 larvae are found per square foot, treatment may be warranted in commercial turf or golf courses.

Mature fall armyworms measure 1½ inches long when fully grown. Their body color can range from green, to brown to black. When looking for them, pay particular attention to their head capsule and the presence of a prominent inverted white "y" on the head capsule. A hand-held magnifying glass may be needed to see that feature on smaller larvae. Small larvae do not eat through the leaf tissue, but instead, scrape off all of the green tissue and leave a clear membrane that gives the leaf a "window pane" appearance.

Once they reach the 4<sup>th</sup> instar, they can chew through the entire leaf. When scouting, look for both types of chewing damage.

There are many insecticides that are registered for control of fall armyworms that can provide excellent control. For turf farms, golf courses and athletic fields, the pyrethroid insecticides, which include Astro®, DeltaGard®, Demand®, Scimitar®, Talstar® or Tempo® are quite effective. Conserve™, which is derived from a naturally-occurring bacterium, is also an excellent product. Diazinon, Dursban and Sevin® (carbaryl) are also labeled for some commercial uses to control fall armyworms. Carefully read the label for use patterns, some products may be registered for all turf uses, while others may not.

For homeowners, carefully consider the need to control fall armyworms. Some cool-season lawns may be able to recover from a fall armyworm infestation this late in the year without treatment, and bermuda and zoysia lawns may be so slightly damaged that they would not warrant treatment. There are many products labeled for armyworm control in lawns and gardens. If choosing between granular and liquid applications, keep in mind that granular products are a bit slower acting, and require watering for activation. Carefully read and follow all label restrictions for application and use patterns.

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Director, Plant Disease and Insect Diagnostic Laboratory

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