

**Problem:** Chinch Bugs - *Blissus spp.*



**Hosts:** Primarily zoysiagrass but may infest buffalograss, bermudagrass, and bluegrass.

**Description:** "Field" chinch bugs are commonly found in zoysia lawns but seldom cause damage. They are occasionally found in bermuda and bluegrass. "Buffalograss" chinch bugs have been reported/recorded from several counties in Kansas. Chinch bugs suck plant juices from many grass species including corn, sorghum and wheat. Adult field chinch bugs are black with distinctly black and white patterned wings, whereas some adult buffalograss chinch bugs have but rudimentary wings and, therefore, merely appear to be black. Nymphs of both types are red with a white waistband. Adult field chinch bugs overwinter in bunch grasses, while buffalograss chinch bugs overwinter in the buffalograss per se. Eggs are deposited in the spring. Nymphs begin feeding immediately after emerging from eggs. A second generation is produced later in the summer. Second generation adults overwinter.

Yellowed or browned areas in lawns are an indication of something amiss. Chinch bugs feed on grass near the soil interface or just below the soil surface. Therefore, close, on-hands-and-knees inspections are necessary to determine the presence of chinch bugs. High populations of tiny red or larger dark-colored nymphs and/or adult chinch bugs would indicate that they are the cause (or a contributing factor) for grass discoloration and dead spots.

**Recommendations:** Normally, 20 chinch bugs per square foot is considered enough to warrant treatment. The University of Nebraska tested a number of insecticides and found that bifenthrin applied in 3 to 5 gallons of water per 1,000 square feet provided up to 95 percent reduction of chinch bugs. Bifenthrin can be found in Hi-Yield Bug Blaster II, Hi-Yield Bug Blaster Bifenthrin and Ortho Bug B Gon Lawn Insect Killer. After applying insecticide, water enough (1/8 to 1/4 inch) to move it into the thatch layer where most of the bugs are found. Do not apply more than a quarter-inch of water to prevent leaching the insecticide down below the zone occupied by the bugs. Follow label directions to determine dilution and application rates. Do not reenter the area until the grass has dried.

**References:**

1. [Lawn Insect Pests](#), K-State Research and Extension Entomology Publication MF2901
2. Turfgrass Insects of the United States and Canada, Cornell University Press, pg. 40 - 55

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