

Chinch Bug



Hairy chinch bugs can be frequent pests of home lawns in Pennsylvania. They are often associated with open, sunny areas and may be as numerous as 150 to 200 insects per square foot. Chinch bug populations frequently go unnoticed because of their small size and coloration, which blends in with turfgrass and thatch. They prefer high, dry locations exposed to direct sunlight. Chinch bug damage may be masked during periods of drought.

Hairy chinch bugs prefer feeding on red fescues, perennial ryegrass, bentgrass, and Kentucky bluegrass. Chinch bug infestations frequently occur in turfgrass with thick thatch that is exposed to full sunlight during periods of hot, dry weather. Chinch bug damage is often less noticeable during the spring and early summer. Damage frequently appears from early July through late August when the insects are actively feeding. Chinch bug nymphs and adults have piercing mouth parts that cause significant feeding damage by removing plant fluids and by injecting a toxin that clogs the vascular system and causes the grass to yellow, turn reddish brown, and eventually die. The bugs then work outward from the centers of infestation, destroying grass as they advance. Chinch bug damaged areas often coalesce into large patches of dead, brown grass. Damage caused by chinch bugs is usually permanent and the lawn will not recover when it rains or the lawn gets watered.

