# ODDBALL PESTS OF 2012 – THE NEW NORMAL?

Phil Pellitteri [1/]

Weather has had a major impact on the insects and their activity in 2012. A very mild winter, early spring warm-up, serious drought in the southern half of the state, numerous strong southerly airflows and an extended growing season all had influences this season. This will be a record-breaking year in the insect diagnostic lab for number of samples and e- mails with over 6,600 contacts for 2012.

The early warm-up in March brought in many southern migrants. Adult variegated cutworms and armyworms moths were collected in March a full three weeks earlier than any previous records, and large numbers of cutworm egg masses were found pasted on siding and windows in the northern part of the state.. By May and early June major (almost biblical) climbing cutworm problems were seen in central and northern counties. Large influxes of both aster and potato leafhoppers were recorded early and a number of "southern insects" including the Genista broom moth, citron bug, and large numbers of two species of migratory butterflies. Strawberry growers experienced eastern flower thrips problems 2012 and a new tospovirus ( likely thrips transmitted ) was found on soybeans in the state this year.

The drought caused major spider mite outbreaks on soybeans, corn, vegetables and ornamentals. Dry weather also caused large populations of lace bugs, thrips, false chinch bugs, and boxelder bugs. The plant stress of 2012 will cause major increases in wood boring beetles including two-lined chestnut borer, bronze birch borer and I*ps* bark beetles on conifers.

The extended growing season caused some insects to attempt extra generations such as squash vine boresr, Colorado potato beetles and boxelder bugs. We saw a similar insect response in 1988. Spring degree days accumulations were 3 weeks ahead of the norm, which caused people to miss treatment windows for a number of insects. This was the type of year you did not want to rely on normal calendar dates for treatments.

Not all insects did well in 2012. The early warm weather caused early egg hatch and Eastern tent caterpillar and gypsy moth populations seemed to suffer. It was a bad year for native butterflies but we did see an influx of southern species that are not seen every year. Soybean aphids did not like the heat, and it was a quite year for multi-colored Asiann lady beetle invasions.

New state records for 2012 include the squash attacking Citron Bug *Leptoglossus gonagra ,* and the fig fruit fly ( *Zarpionus indianus*,) , plus we found overwintering adults of the Brown Marmorated Stink bug in Brown, Dane, and Jefferson counties and the first recorded nymph in the state. We had the first recorded crop damage from the spotted winged drosophila in 15 counties with major problems in fall raspberries.

[1/] Distinguished Faculty Associate, Department of Entomology,1630 Linden Drive, Univ. of Wisconsin-Madison , Madison, WI 53706.

The biggest ongoing long-term impact on insect activity is the lack of significant cold temperatures in the winter. This has allowed many insects to expand their range northward in the last two decades. I tease that the "governor moved us to Missouri a few years back" but there has been a dramatic change in "southern" insect activity in the state and those trends are expected to continue.