

SOYBEAN GALL MIDGE

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Introduction

Soybean gall midge, *Resseliella maxima*, is a relatively new insect pest of soybean found in Nebraska, Iowa, South Dakota, Minnesota, and Missouri. To date, it has not been found in Wisconsin.

Origins of this insect are unknown. There were a few reports of damage from this insect dating back to 2011. However, these reports were sporadic and damage more of a curiosity than widespread or economic. Beginning with the 2018 growing season, reports of damage were reported from approximately 66 counties in a core area of Nebraska, Iowa, South Dakota, and Minnesota. The infested area expanded to Missouri in 2019 and a total of over 90 counties.

Identification

Soybean gall midge was only recently described as *Resseliella maxima*. It is unknown whether it is native or invasive. Adults are about ¼ inch long, have light colored banding on their legs and antennae and can be described as “mosquito-like.” Larvae cause damage to soybean and are small and maggot-like. Small maggots are likely to be translucent white older, more mature larvae are orange.

Life Cycle

Many aspects of the soybean gall midge life cycle are unknown at this point in time. Likely, they overwinter as pupae and adults begin flying in June. There are two if not three generations/year.

Damage

After hatch, maggots will feed on stems near the soil line. Stems will start to turn black at the feeding site and can be swollen and brittle. Note: not all black stems at the soil line are the result of soybean gall midge feeding. After prolonged feeding the entire plant may wilt or turn necrotic. Several maggots may be found at each feeding site.

Scouting

Adult soybean gall midges are considered weak fliers. Therefore, damage is more common along field edges which include roadsides, ditches, and grassy waterways. For initial detection, walk field edges looking for individual plants which are wilted or dead. Inspect damaged plants for blackened areas at the soil line and for larvae. If orange maggots are found, please confirm the identification by contacting your local extension agent.

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