

Leafhoppers

Leafhoppers are small insects (1/8-1/6 inch) that have an elongate body. The adults, which are winged, readily jump and fly from plants when disturbed. Immature stages (nymphs) are wingless but can quite actively crawl on plants. The leafhoppers associated with hemp are poorly studied at present but adults of at least three species have been commonly found on the crop in Colorado. It is likely that many leafhoppers found on hemp do not reproduce on the crop, and those that do occur consist only of adults that have moved from other plants on which they breed.

Leafhoppers feed on leaves and stems with piercing sucking mouthparts that extract a bit of fluid from the plant. Most feed on the phloem of plants, resulting in insignificant effects on plant growth and produce no visible symptoms. A few leafhoppers feed on the mesophyll and a small, light flecking injury may occur at the feeding site. And although some leafhoppers are known to transmit plant pathogens that cause diseases of crops (e.g., aster leafhopper and the phytoplasma that produces aster yellows) none of these leafhopper-vectored plant diseases are presently known to affect hemp. In summary, it is unlikely that leafhoppers will be a significant pest of the crop under any circumstances.

Hemiptera: Cicadellidae



Some leafhoppers collected from hemp in Colorado.



Leafhoppers that have been collected from hemp in Colorado. The picture at the bottom is of an immature stage (nymph).