

False Chinch Bugs

False chinch bugs (*Nysius* species) are one of the most commonly encountered plant feeding insects in much of Colorado. They can be found on wide variety of plants, but mustard family plants are particularly favored. Flixweed and other winter annual mustards (such as winter canola) are critical to their survival between growing seasons but other plants, such as kochia and pigweeds, can be important hosts in summer.

It can be expected that some false chinch bugs will be found in hemp throughout the growing season. However, occurrence of noticeably large numbers early in the season will likely only occur if large areas of winter annual mustards in near vicinity are cut or rapidly dry down, forcing migration of the insects. False chinch bugs will also migrate into hemp when it flowers in late summer, as alternate weed hosts dry out and become less available. False chinch bugs are highly migratory; their appearance in hemp can be sudden - and their disappearance may be similarly sudden.

False chinch bugs feed by sucking fluids from leaves of plants in a manner similar to Lygus bugs (“lacerate and flush”). However, their ability to cause injury to leaves, buds and seeds appears to be far less than what is produced by Lygus bugs. It can be expected that measurable damage to hemp foliage by false chinch bugs would only occur when extremely high populations occur on plants for a period of many days-weeks and even in those cases usually only a couple of leaves will show visible wilting or dieback symptoms. The damage that false chinch bugs may produce to hemp has very little potential to cause effects on yield.



False chinch bugs.



False chinch bugs massed on hemp flowers and seeds.

Immature stages (nymphs) of false chinch bugs rarely, if ever, develop on hemp. However, they can be extremely abundant in hemp fields if the weeds on which they do develop (particularly mustard family plants) are present. When these weed hosts dry down, are cut, or disked, this can cause large numbers of false chinch bug nymphs to migrate on the surface of the ground. Numbers of the wingless nymphs can be extraordinarily high in some situations, and often cause alarm when observed, but have never been observed to cause any visible injury to hemp crops.

Hemiptera: Lygaeidae



False chinch bug adults (with wings) and nymphs (without wings)

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A very high population of false chinch bugs on a hemp leaf. In this case there was some wilting and leaf tip dieback associated with the infestation, but only a couple of leaves of the plant showed any symptoms..