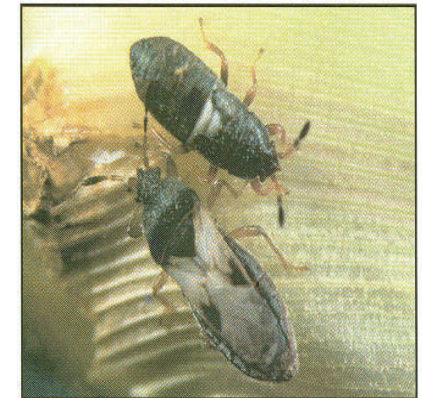


This is an informational brochure for our maintenance communities.



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## Chinch Bugs and St. Augustine Grass



*Top: Chinch bug nymphs  
Bottom: Chinch bug adult and nymph*

ArtisTree Landscape  
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## The Southern Chinch Bug *Blissus insularis*



Chinch bugs are small insects approximately 1/8 inch long with straw-like mouth parts that feed on the fluids in grass. They are typically active March through November and St. Augustine grass is their favorite food.

This is a difficult insect to control for several reasons. One reason is that all stages of the insect are present at the same time, which is egg, nymph, and adult. Current insecticides do not kill the egg so new generations are always continuing on. Another reason the chinch bug is difficult to control is that the female can lay as many as 300-400 eggs in her lifetime. With 7-10 generations per season populations will be enormous.

The chinch bug prefers hot dry conditions, so they are often found in drought stressed lawns. A severe drought during the spring (typical for this area) is the perfect breeding conditions for the chinch bug. Dead patches of grass may be noticed first along a driveway, curb, sidewalk or foundation of the home, due to the heat emitted from such objects. They are very seldom found in shady areas.



There are natural enemies of the chinch bug, but they are not abundant enough to keep chinch bug populations under control. Insecticide treatment is usually required to combat this pesky pest. However, probably the number one reason this pest has been difficult to control is directly related to building up resistance to the chemical products, subsequently they are causing extensive damage to our lawns. We have been working closely with the University of Florida county extension office for the latest research findings and recommendations for new treatments.

There are certain cultural practices that can be effective against chinch bugs. Irrigation is critical, as chinch bugs thrive in drought conditions. It is very important to ensure your system is working properly and providing adequate coverage. Notify the proper maintenance personnel if you find something broken or not functioning.



Regular lawn scouting can also be effective for early detection and treatment. Proper mowing height, regular irrigation and proper fertilization all promote healthy turf, which is one of the best defenses against chinch bug. Contact your account representative if you notice areas that appear to be typical of chinch bug damage. However, be aware that not all damage to lawns is caused by chinch bugs, other factors can create similar appearances.

Homeowner education and awareness is also part of the strategy to battle against chinch bugs. Understanding the conditions that are favorable and early detection can be key factors for early treatment and will limit excessive damage to your lawn.

### Selected References

Southern Chinch Bug, *Blissus insularis* Barber (Insecta: Hemiptera: Lygaeidae) University of Florida IFAS Extension

Current Status of Chinch Bug Management in Florida—University of Florida IFAS Entomology and Nematology Department

A Chinch Bug's Favorite Food by Ralph E. Mitchell—county extension director/horticulture agent for Charlotte County Cooperative Extension Service