



## CHINCH BUGS

The southern chinch bug, *Blissus insularis*, is one of the most important insect pests of St. Augustine-grass in Florida. All varieties of St. Augustine-grass grown today are damaged by the chinch bug. Our current dry and warm conditions here in Central Florida will increase the amount of chinch bug activity and inevitable damage, which will continue until the presence of cooler weather in the fall.

### Identification

Adult southern chinch bugs are small and slender, 1 /6 to 1 /5 of an inch long, and have black bodies with white wings. Each wing bears a distinctive, triangular black mark. Recently hatched nymphs (immatures) are wingless, yellow or pinkish-red, with a light-colored band across their backs (abdomen).

Drought damage is commonly confused with chinch bug damage because they both cause the grass to turn brown and die. Also, chinch bugs are attracted to drought-stressed areas so you commonly have drought damage and chinch bug damage present at the same time. Early symptoms of chinch bugs are irregular patches of dead or stunted grass surrounded by a halo of yellowing, dying grass.

A significant number of live chinch bugs are present (at least 20 per square foot) where damage is occurring. Chinch bugs are mostly near the soil surface and where the healthy grass meets the yellowing- brown areas. Because chinch bugs are very small and will require a close inspection beneath the grass blades, they are often difficult to find during an inspection.

While chinch bugs can be found causing damage during any time of the year in Central Florida, their damage is most prevalent during the hot, dry weather and often found along the edge of sidewalks and driveways where the soil is usually drier.

### Chinch Bug Control

Proper mowing, watering and fertilization will reduce the likelihood of encountering chinch bug activity. However, once chinch bugs begin their damage an insecticide will be needed for control. If you suspect that you have chinch bug damage or wish to prevent them, we will be glad to send out a horticulturist who will provide a free analysis for your lawn.

*“We Have Service Down To A Science”*