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## **Grasshoppers Are Beginning to Hop Everywhere!!!**

As we walk outdoors in late summer, we might be overwhelmed by the number of grasshoppers. This is due to warm, dry autumns and hot, dry summers, which favor grasshopper survival and reproduction. Grasshoppers develop through simple metamorphosis with an egg, nymph and adult stage. The female grasshopper uses its long ovipositor to deposit eggs  $\frac{1}{2}$  to 2 inches into the soil in the fall. They will deposit eggs in such areas as weedy places, fence rows, and ditches. The eggs hatch in the spring or early summer, depending upon species. The nymphal stage feeds for around 6 weeks before molting into an adult with fully developed wings. The adult grasshoppers will be found until late fall or until a frost occurs.

Grasshoppers feed mainly on weeds. However, when the weeds dry up the grasshoppers go in search for food. This search may lead them to the plants in your landscape.

### **Some Control Options:**

#### **Non-Chemical Controls:**

- 1) Weed control is the most effective way to decrease the number of grasshoppers in an area. If weeds are eliminated, nymphs will starve and adults will be discouraged from laying eggs in the area.
- 2) Also tilling the soil in the late summer will discourage female grasshoppers from depositing eggs, since they like to lay eggs in undisturbed soil.
- 3) Floating row covers can be used to protect such areas as vegetables, flower gardens, and small fruit trees from grasshoppers. The fabric allows sunlight through, while protecting plants from insects and cold weather.

#### **Chemical Controls:**

Monitor grasshopper infestations and treat when grasshoppers are in the nymphal stage and before they move into crops or landscapes. The immature grasshoppers are more susceptible to insecticides. Some effective insecticides include the active ingredients

diflubenzuron, cyfluthrin, bifenthrin, acephate and permethrin. Also baits can be applied such as those containing carbaryl.

Insecticides typically do not persist in the environment more than a few days. This means grasshoppers may soon re-invade.



Differential grasshopper, *Melanoplus differentialis* (Thomas) (Orthoptera: Acrididae). Photo by Dr. Bart Drees, Texas A&M University.

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