

GROWERTALKS

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The Threat of the Brown Marmorated Stink Bug

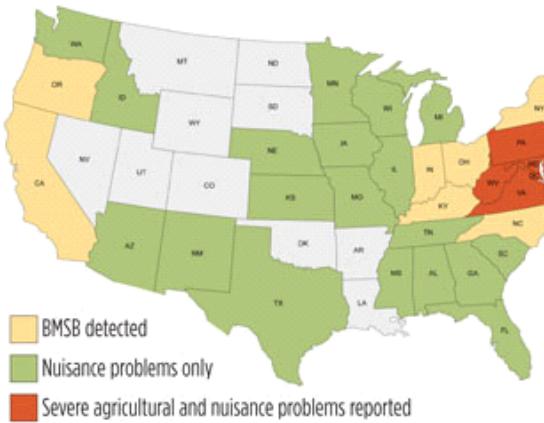
Stanton Gill, Karen Rane, Suzanne Klick & David Clement



Editor's note: Dr. Gill and his team first reported on the brown marmorated stink bug in the December 2010 issue of GrowerTalks. This article is a follow-up that includes two more years of research.

If you haven't heard of the brown marmorated stink bug (BMSB), don't worry—you probably will in the very near future. This bug was introduced from Asia and has hitchhiked across the United States and into Canada. Officials in Mexico are anticipating that it will visit them soon. It's even managed to hitch an airplane ride to Switzerland.

This pest has potential to spread through Central America and most of Europe. Six states are currently listed as the epicenter of this outbreak, including Maryland, Pennsylvania, West Virginia, Virginia, New Jersey and Delaware. USDA-ARS is leading a team approach to dealing with this invasive, fast-spreading pest. Being in one of the "epi-center" states encouraged us to investigate the potential damage from this invasive pest before it becomes well established in other locations. (See map.)



Map of the continental United States where the brown marmorated stink bug has been located and identifying the severe problem areas.

Map courtesy of Tracy Leskey at USDA-APHIS.

damaging legume crops such as soybeans. Steven Still reported the following legumes were grown by perennial growers: baptisia, lupinus, *Thermopsis caroliniana*, *Galega hartlandii*, *Lathyrus latifolius* and *indigofera*. We then went to four major herbaceous perennial growers in Maryland to see which of these legume family perennials they commonly grew for market. We decided since lupines were the most commonly used, we would include this perennial in the trial.

We also surveyed to see if they had detected BMSB feeding on any herbaceous perennials in their nurseries.

BMSB had been observed feeding and laying eggs on tomatoes and peppers in commercial production fields and homeowners' gardens. Since greenhouse growers grow tomatoes and pepper transplants, we added these to the list of greenhouse crops to evaluate the impact of BMSB. The rest of the list of herbaceous annual plants (basically bedding plants) were selected based on information from growers or Master Gardeners who had observed BMSB feeding on these plants in the landscape.

The list of plants involved in the trials includes: tomato, pepper, garden impatiens, petunia, New Guinea impatiens, celosia, snapdragon, dahlia, baptisia, lupine and heuchera.

We worked with two commercial greenhouses and one herbaceous perennial growing operation to obtain plants for our replicated trials. Plants were moved into the University of Maryland Greenhouse in the first week of April 2011 and arranged in three randomized blocks. A second set of three blocks was established in the first week of May. Each block was made up of a mosquito net tent placed on the greenhouse bench containing 8 plants of each species. A total of 78 plants were placed in each tent. Plant species were randomized in the 6 tents. The tented areas were each 36 in. wide, 72 in. long and 48 in. high. The mosquito net tent confined the BMSB to the test plants and did not allow them to escape into the greenhouse.

Adult BMSB used in this study were obtained from a colony maintained at the University of Maryland CMREC lab. The BMSB were sexed (male and females divided out) at our lab with 50 males and 50 females being selected for release in each tent. Initially, we thought one release would be sufficient, but due to high mortality after 7 days, we made weekly releases of BMSB adults to keep the population at our target of 100 per tent.

Each week we evaluated the plants for leaf and flower injury and observed feeding activity of BMSB. We also checked the plants to see if egg laying occurred on the plants. Plants were also examined for the presence of

Purpose & methods

Is the brown marmorated stink bug a major threat to greenhouse bedding plants, vegetable transplants and herbaceous perennial plants? That is what we hoped to answer when we began our study at the University of Maryland Central Maryland Research and Education Center.

We started by contacting Steven Still at the Perennial Plant Growers Association for a list of key herbaceous perennials that were legumes. In the published literature, this Asian pest was listed as feeding on plants in the legume family. In Maryland, they had been observed

damaging legume crops such as soybeans. Steven Still reported the following legumes were grown by

perennial growers: baptisia, lupinus, *Thermopsis caroliniana*, *Galega hartlandii*, *Lathyrus latifolius* and

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Each week we evaluated the plants for leaf and flower injury and observed feeding activity of BMSB. We also checked the plants to see if egg laying occurred on the plants. Plants were also examined for the presence of

disease symptoms, in case feeding damage predisposed plants to disease.

No insecticides were used in the test area. To deal with thrips and aphids, we used biological control measures. For thrips control we released *Amblyseius cucumeri* at 5 per sq. ft. of growing area, releasing one time in each netted area. For aphid control, we released *Aphidius colemani* and *Aphidius ervi* at a rate of 2 per sq. ft. of growing area. The trials started in the first week of April and continued until late June with observations being made on a weekly basis.

What we found

Baptisia had heavy feeding activity by April 19 on stems and foliage. Even though the feeding was heavy with as many as 7 BMSB recorded feeding on one plant at one time, no visible damage was recorded on this plant. Heuchera appears to be of no interest to BMSB with no feeding or injury to foliage occurring on this plant. Dahlia foliage and stems were fed on by BMSB, but no measureable damage was found on the plants from the feeding. We observed heavy feeding on foliage of petunias causing a stippling damage with chlorophyll breakdown. No damage was found on the flowers.

BMSB also fed heavily on snapdragon plants, seeming to prefer the seedpods that formed after flowering. Again, no damage was found on the flowers. BMSB did not feed or lay eggs on celosia in the trial blocks. BMSB fed on tomato and pepper stems, flowers and fruit, causing stippling of foliage and spotting of fruit. No egg laying occurred on any plants in this study, and we found no disease symptoms associated with BMSB feeding injury.

In addition to the trial at the University of Maryland greenhouse, we placed pheromone traps at 4 commercial greenhouse operations. One trap was placed outside and one inside a greenhouse at each of the locations. We also worked with four roll-up side high-tunnel operations in monitoring for BMSB activity. Traps were placed inside and outside of the high tunnels and whole plant counts were conducted similar to the method used in the greenhouse survey. We counted insects in the traps weekly from late July through the end of October and conducted 15-minute plant examinations at each of the operations. At the commercial greenhouse sites, we consistently found nymphs and adults in the traps outside the greenhouse and on surrounding plants throughout the monitoring time. We found no adults, nymphs or eggs on plants inside the commercial greenhouses during our monitoring period. In the high tunnel operations, we found nymphs on plants near the baited trap in mid-August and a few adults in early September, but this was significantly less than the number of BMSB on plants or traps outside of the greenhouse.

Conclusion

When we confined BMSB on plants in a greenhouse, they fed on herbaceous transplants such as snapdragon, petunia, dahlia, baptisia, pepper and tomato. BMSB did not survive well in the greenhouse environment. In our survey of commercial greenhouses, BMSB was found in headhouses, in sheds and barns, but were not found in greenhouse growing structures and none were found feeding on any of the plant material. We suspect that one or more factors in the greenhouse environment are not conducive to BMSB. This is good news for greenhouse growers. **GT**

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La Amenaza del Chinche Apestoso Marmolado

*Nota del editor: El Dr. Gill y su equipo reportaron el chinche apestoso por primera vez en la edición de Diciembre de 2010 de **GrowerTalks**. Este artículo es un seguimiento a los primeros hallazgos, e incluye dos años más de investigación.*

Si Ud. no ha escuchado hablar del chinche apestoso marmolado pardo (BMSB por sus siglas en inglés) no se preocupe—probablemente lo hará en el futuro cercano. Este chinche fue introducido desde el Asia y se ha abierto camino desde los Estados Unidos hasta Canadá. Las autoridades Mexicanas esperan que los visite pronto, e incluso ha logrado viajar como polizón dentro de un avión que se dirigía a Suiza.

La plaga tiene potencial para diseminarse a través de América Central y gran parte de Europa. Seis estados aparecen actualmente en la lista que conforma el epicentro de este brote, incluyendo Maryland, Pensilvania, Virginia Oeste, Virginia, Nueva Jersey y Delaware. El USDA-ARS lidera un equipo para manejar esta especie invasiva y de rápida dispersión. El hecho de estar en uno de los estados “epicéntricos” nos animó a investigar el daño potencial que representa esta plaga invasora antes de que se establezca en otras localidades. (Ver mapa.)

Propósito & métodos

¿Es el chinche apestoso una gran amenaza para las plantas de surco, plántulas de hortalizas y plantas perennes herbáceas cultivadas bajo invernadero? Esto fue lo que quisimos responder cuando iniciamos nuestro estudio en el Centro de Investigación y Educación de Maryland Central, de la Universidad de Maryland.

Comenzamos por contactar a Steven Still en la Asociación de Productores de Plantas Perennes, pidiéndole una lista de plantas perennes herbáceas que son leguminosas, pues la literatura reporta esta plaga Asiática alimentándose de plantas de esa familia y en Maryland se habían observado causando daños en cultivos leguminosos como la soya. Steven Still reportó las siguientes leguminosas perennes en producción: baptisia, lupinos, *Thermopsis caroliniana*, *Galega hartlandii*, *Lathyrus latifolius* e indigofera. Luego visitamos cuatro productores grandes de perennes herbáceas en Maryland, para ver cuáles de estas plantas cultivaban comúnmente, y decidimos incluir los lupinos en nuestros ensayos, al ver que eran muy comunes.

También condujimos una encuesta para ver si habían observado el BMSB alimentándose de alguna planta perenne dentro de sus viveros.

El BMSB había sido observado alimentándose y poniendo huevos en campos de tomates y pimientos, y en jardines particulares. Puesto que las plántulas de tomate y pimiento se producen bajo invernadero, agregamos estos a la lista de especies a ser evaluadas. El resto de la lista de plantas herbáceas anuales (básicamente plantas de surco) fue seleccionado con base en información suministrada por productores o Jardineros Maestros que habían observado el BMSB alimentándose de estas plantas.

La lista de plantas incluidas en el ensayo comprende: tomate, pimiento, impatiens de jardín, petunias, impatiens Nueva Guinea, celosia, bocas de dragón, dalia, baptisia, lupino y heuchera.

Trabajamos con dos invernaderos comerciales y un cultivo de perennes herbáceas, que nos suministraron plantas para los ensayos y sus réplicas. Las plantas fueron transferidas a los invernaderos de la Universidad de Maryland durante la primera semana de Abril de 2011 y organizadas en tres bloques aleatorios; un mes más tarde, en la primera semana de Mayo, se estableció un segundo grupo de tres bloques. Cada bloque constaba de una carpa fabricada con malla para mosquitos colocada sobre un banco de invernadero que contenía 8 plantas de cada especie, para un total de 78 plantas bajo cada carpa. Las especies de plantas fueron colocadas aleatoriamente bajo 6 carpas de 36 in. de ancho por 72 in. de largo y 48 in. de alto. La malla confinaba el BMSB a las plantas del ensayo, sin dejarlo escaparse al resto del invernadero.

Los BMSB adultos utilizados en el estudio fueron obtenidos de una colonia mantenida en el laboratorio CMREC de la Universidad de Maryland. Los chinches fueron sexados en nuestro laboratorio (separados machos de hembras), seleccionando 50 machos y 50 hembras para ser liberados dentro de cada carpa. Inicialmente pensamos que una liberación sería suficiente, pero debido a la alta mortalidad registrada después de 7 días, decidimos hacer liberaciones semanales de adultos para mantener la población dentro de nuestra meta del 100 por carpa.

Cada semana evaluamos las plantas en busca de daños en las hojas y flores y observar la actividad alimenticia de los chinches. También revisamos las plantas para ver si había ocurrido oviposición y en busca de síntomas de enfermedad, en caso de que el daño causado por la alimentación de los chinches predispusiera las plantas a enfermedades.

No se usaron insecticidas en el área de ensayo. Para controlar thrips y áfidos usamos medidas de control biológico: para el control de thrips liberamos *Amblyseius cucumeri* a razón de 5 por ft² de área de cultivo, y una vez en cada área enmallada. Para el control de áfidos liberamos *Aphidius colemani* y *Aphidius ervi* en dosis de 2 por ft² de área de cultivo. Los ensayos comenzaron la primera semana de Abril y continuaron hasta fines de Junio, con observaciones semanales.

Lo que encontramos

El 19 de Abril, la baptisia ya mostraba una intensa actividad de alimentación en tallos y follaje, pero aún cuando llegaron a reportarse hasta siete chinches sobre una misma planta a la vez, no se registraron daños visibles sobre las mismas. La heuchera no parece interesar al BMSB y no se observó daño alguno en el follaje de estas plantas. El BMSB se alimentó del follaje de las dalias, pero no se encontraron daños medibles causados por esta actividad en las mismas. Observamos intensa actividad en las hojas de petunia, que causó un moteado con descomposición de clorofila, pero ningún daño en las flores.

El chinche también se alimentó profusamente de las plantas de boca de dragón, pareciendo preferir las

cápsulas de semillas que se forman después de la florescencia; nuevamente, no se encontraron daños en las flores. El BMSB no se alimentó o puso huevos en las plantas de celosia que se encontraban en los bloques del ensayo, sin embargo, sí se alimentó de los tallos, frutos y hojas de los tomates y pimentones, causando moteados en el follaje y manchas sobre los frutos. No se observó oviposición sobre ninguna de las plantas incluidas en este estudio, ni se encontraron síntomas de enfermedad asociados a los daños causados por el chinche.

Además de los ensayos realizados en los invernaderos de la Universidad de Maryland, colocamos trampas de feromonas en 4 invernaderos comerciales, una al exterior y una dentro de cada invernadero, en cada una de las localidades. También trabajamos en cuatro instalaciones tipo túnel alto con cortinas laterales enrollables, monitoreando la actividad del BMSB. Colocamos trampas dentro y fuera de los túneles, y realizamos conteos sobre plantas completas, de manera similar a la utilizada en la encuesta de los invernaderos. Contamos semanalmente el número de insectos, entre el fin de Julio y el fin de Octubre, realizando exámenes a las plantas durante 15-minutos en cada localidad. En los invernaderos encontramos consistentemente ninfas y adultos en las trampas al exterior de los invernaderos y las plantas circundantes. No encontramos adultos, ninfas o huevos en plantas dentro de los invernaderos durante el período de monitoreo. En los túneles altos encontramos ninfas sobre las plantas que se encontraban cerca de la trampa a mediados de Agosto y comienzos de Septiembre, pero su número fue significativamente menor que el número de chinches presentes sobre las plantas o sobre las trampas al exterior de los invernaderos.

Conclusión

Cuando confinamos los BMSB a las plantas del invernadero, éstos se alimentaron de plántulas herbáceas tales como bocas de dragón, petunias, dalias, baptisias, pimientos y tomates, sin embargo el BMSB no sobrevivió bien en el ambiente del invernadero. En la encuesta que realizamos entre los invernaderos comerciales, encontramos BMSB en instalaciones principales, alacenas y establos, pero no en los invernaderos o estructuras de cultivo y no se encontró ninguno alimentándose del material vegetal. Sospechamos que uno o más factores del ambiente del invernadero no son favorables al BMSB, lo cual es una Buena noticia para los productores. **GT**

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