

Providing Leadership in Environmental Entomology

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Grasshoppers

There are several species of grasshoppers that are common in tobacco fields, most of them belonging to the genus *Melanoplus*. This genus includes the common differential grasshopper and the red-legged grasshopper, among others. Grasshoppers rarely develop within tobacco fields. Instead, they develop in uncultivated areas such as field margins, pastures, or roadsides and then migrate into fields.

Grasshopper eggs are laid in the soil in a cemented mass or pod commonly containing from eight to 25 eggs. They are normally laid from late August to October, overwinter in the egg stage, and then hatch from mid-May to July. Nymphs resemble adults except for size and lack of wings. There are usually five nymphal instars, with development taking from 40 to 60 days.

Grasshoppers will eat almost anything, including nearly all of our cultivated plants. There are usually a few grasshoppers in nearly every tobacco field every year, but they usually do only minor damage. Occasionally, conditions will favor the build-up of large populations of grasshoppers, and total loss of crops may occur if control measures are not taken.

As with so many insect pests, proper field sanitation may aid in grasshopper control. When necessary, insecticides are available with which grasshoppers can be controlled. Since the list



An adult grasshopper feeding on a tobacco leaf.
Photo: D. G. Manley

of labeled products is constantly changing, and since available products varies from state to state, there will be no mention of specific products. With all insecticides, read and follow label instructions carefully.

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EII/AG-18 (New 03/1999).