

David Hallauer
District Extension Agent
Crops & Soils/Horticulture

Alfalfa Weevil Emergence Begins

According to the Kansas Mesonet Alfalfa Weevil Growing Degree Day (GDD) Calculator (<https://mesonet.k-state.edu/agriculture/degreedays/>) scouting for weevils should begin at 150-180 GDDs (eggs hatch as early as 25 GDDs). We've reached that point in Northeast Kansas with GDD's ranging from 112 at Hiawatha to 190 at Silver lake (Corning, Oskaloosa, and Rossville are all points between) – and sure enough, weevils were found in early sampling last week in the southern regions of the Meadowlark Extension District.

In comparison to historical data for this time of year, GDDs are 80-100 units ahead of normal. Because of this GDD accumulation, alfalfa weevil damage should be monitored to make sure alfalfa growth is staying ahead of weevil damage.

Will cold snaps do any damage to weevils? Maybe. If young alfalfa weevils are exposed to temperatures in the teens and 20's for long periods, it's possible some mortality will occur. Typically, however, they do a pretty good job of hiding in plant terminals and debris and are generally protected unless temperatures take a pretty significant drop.

Weevil damage monitoring will continue through early spring. If you want to receive regular weevil damage reports via e-mail, contact me. I'll provide regular reports on feeding pressure from sites monitored through the District.

Rust – on Pears?

We're pretty familiar with cedar apple rust, but if you notice those same types of yellow-orange spots on leaves of ornamental or fruiting pear trees, it's probably cedar-hawthorn rust. Very similar to cedar apple rust (control is the same), it typically results mostly in aesthetic damage. That means it's considered a nuisance rather than a significant harm to the tree, rendering control optional and only recommended if the tree experiences substantial leaf drop.

If you've had issues in the past and don't want to risk further damage, know that control must be applied *preventatively*. Once symptoms show on leaves, it's too late with the fungus only active in April-May. Typical 'control' programs call for application of a fungicide every 7-10 days from the first of April through the end of May (they don't last all spring). Fungicides have to be present on foliage prior to disease spore germination to be effective.

Want to try and avoid spraying that often? Consider using a fungicide containing the active ingredient myclobutanil (Immunox, Immunox Plus, or Fertilome F-Stop Lawn & Garden Spray). Myclobutanil will kill rust spores up to four days after germination. With this four-day kickback, you can wait until you see spores (orange globs/galls on junipers) being released before you spray. Spores will generally only develop during rainy, spring weather.

What about the juniper host of the juniper to pear spore exchange? Rust actually has a minimal effect on junipers, so no control is need to protect juniper or cedar trees.