

Eastern Lubber Grasshopper (*Romalea microptera*)

Introduced: Native to the eastern United States

Current Infestation: The eastern lubber grasshopper is limited to the southeastern and south central portion of the United States. It occurs throughout Florida and is considered our most abundant grasshopper.

Description/Biology: Lubbers have a very distinctive appearance. Immature grasshoppers (nymphs) are typically black with one or more distinctive yellow or red stripes and are wingless. The front legs and sides of the head are often red. Upon hatching they crawl up out of the soil and congregate near suitable food sources.



Adults are usually 2½ to 3 inches long (63 to 76 mm long). The general color of adults is dull yellow with varying degrees of black spots and markings. The front pair of wings are yellow with numerous scattered black dots, while the hind wings when



exposed reveal a bright red/rose coloration.

The color of adult lubbers also varies throughout most of the insect's range. One population is almost all black with a few marks of yellow.



The adults of this type seem to resemble the nymph stage, but has wings. However, the different populations are all the same species.

Lubbers cannot fly but jump for short distances. Grasshoppers do not bite, however, they make a hissing sound and will froth when disturbed. Only one generation occurs per year. Female grasshoppers lay their eggs during the summer months in soil. In south Florida hatching begins in late February.

Seasonality: Adults are not commonly found during the cooler months of the dry season. The highest number of adults are found during July and August. Nymphs are commonly found during the spring months.

Hosts: Wide range of cultivated crops including citrus, vegetables, landscape ornamental plants, especially amaryllis and crinum, spider, and rain lilies.

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Importance: The eastern lubber grasshopper rarely occurs in high enough numbers to cause significant damage to gardens and ornamentals, and is considered only a nuisance. Most of the small nymphs die naturally.

Damage: The Eastern lubber grasshopper feeds on most plant parts by chewing holes or feeding on the leaf margins. It is typically not an economic problem. Older nymphs can cause cosmetic damage to some ornamentals.

Management: These grasshoppers rarely occur in high enough numbers to warrant use of a pesticide. Try to remove and destroy lubbers before they become adults to prevent egg laying. In March, start monitoring for the black nymphs to be removed or destroyed.

Homeowner: - Lubbers are large, slow moving, and harmless to humans. In most cases, they can be kept under control by hand by collecting them with a net or knocking them off the plants. Dispose of them in the garbage, or by crushing or squishing with pliers or some other object. Lubbers are more easily collected and destroyed late in the day since they tend to be less active and are found on the top of plants.

If chemical control is necessary, there are several insecticides registered for use on ornamentals, fruits, and vegetables to control grasshoppers available at garden centers and hardware stores.

Professional and Grower - If chemical control is necessary, several products are labeled for control of grasshoppers which include acephate, azadirachtin, bifenthrin, carbaryl, cyfluthrin, deltamethrin, and kaolin. Grasshoppers are much easier to control when they are young nymphs. As they mature, and grow larger, higher rates of toxicants may be necessary for effective control.

Websites:

<http://entnemdept.ifas.ufl.edu/ghopper/ghopper.html>

<http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/CH056>

<http://creatures.ifas.ufl.edu/orn/lubber.htm>

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August 2006