GRAPE LEAFHOPPER

Hemiptera: Cicadellidae

Erythroneura spp.

Bug of the Month

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Grape Leafhoppers include several species that feed on grape foliage, damaging the leaves by removing the cell contents, and causing empty cells that appear as pale-yellow spots or stippling. High populations of leafhoppers can turn the entire leaf pale yellow or white, causing a loss of leaf efficiency and leaf drop. This can result in fruit sunburn and may delay fruit ripening, especially in young vines. Field workers can be affected by the accumulation of small droplets of leafhopper excrement on berries and the growth of sooty mold, which results in reduced fruit marketability via berry spotting in table grapes. Grape leafhoppers overwinter as adults in leaf litter in the vineyard or in plant debris around the vineyard. As temperatures increase in the spring, adults feed on a variety of weeds, bushes, and trees before migrating to vineyards to feed on the leaves. Adults are about 1/8" in length and white-pale yellow with darker lemon-colored markings on the wings and three black spots towards the posterior portion of the wings, while other related species within the Erythroneura genus have different coloration and markings. Within Pennsylvania, first-generation nymphs hatch in mid-late June, and reach adulthood in 30 days or less, depending on environmental conditions. Notably, grape leafhoppers undergo a different number of generations per year, which depends on the region and seasonal temperatures. Within northwestern regions of Pennsylvania, two generations per year is typical, while there are 1.5 – 2 generations per season in the Lake Erie Region, and likely 2.5 – 3 generations in the southwestern portion of the state.

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