

## Oklahoma Pest Profiles: May

With spring in full force and summer on our doorstep, plants have emerged and exploded with new growth...and so has the insect population. The following insects are active this month. Read on to learn more about these insects and their life cycles, how damage symptoms manifest on their hosts, and which control measures are recommended to keep your garden plants healthy.



### Lace Bug (*Corythucha*, spp.)

**Appearance:** Adults are 1/8" with a lacelike, sculpted wing structure and hood. Predominantly white with black and/or brown markings.

**Hosts:** Host preferences are specific to the species.

Oak, hawthorn, pyracantha, quince, sycamore, elm, black cherry, buckeye, black walnut, hickory, elder, birch and sunflowers.

**Life Cycle:** From egg to adult: 30 days. Adults overwinter on or near the host plant, emerging as the leaves of their host plant appear. Attached by a sticky substance to the underside of leaves, the tiny black eggs hatch into feeding nymphs within a few days. Multiple generations are produced in Oklahoma during the spring and summer months.

**Damage Symptoms:** White or yellow (chlorotic) spots on leaves, black frass (excrement) droppings and cast exoskeletons from molted nymphs on underside of leaves.

**Control:** Beneficial insect enemies may handle light infestations naturally. Heavy infestations can be treated with an [ornamental insecticide](#). Always read the label and follow instructions carefully whenever using pesticide.

### Subterranean Termite Swarmers (*Reticulitermes*, sp.)

**Appearance:** Swarmer adults are reproductive, winged and 1/4" to 3/8" in length. Wings are gray to brownish, bodies are black to yellow brown and thick waisted, antennae are black and straight.

**Hosts:** The worker termites, not the swarmers, consume wood structures of homes and other cellulose sources to feed the colony.



**Life Cycle:** The cycle from egg to adult can take years, and some reproductives have been known to live up to 25 years. Kings and queens are the only active reproductives in a colony, but nymphs may grow into a reproductive, a soldier, or a worker termite, each having a different role in the colony. Reproductives swarm to form a new colony on warm spring days, in the midmorning or midafternoon. When the swarming adults land (they rarely go far), they chew off their wings, find a mate and start a new colony.

**Damage Symptoms:** The swarming adults do not damage structures, but their presence evidences a nearby colony. Look for discarded wings near building structures, and mud tunnels forming ground-to-structure connections from the colony to the food source. Damaged, hollow or soft wood is evidence of worker damage.

**Control:** Consult this [Oklahoma State University Extension Office Fact Sheet](#) when considering control options for subterranean termites.



### **Peachtree Borer** **(*Synanthedon exitiosa*, spp.)**

**Appearance:** Adults are moths, but resemble wasps. Wingspan is 1 ¼', body length 1". Both males and females have steel blue bodies, while males have transparent wings with steel blue edges and veins, and females have solid

steel blue wings. Both have markings on their abdomens; males with yellow bands, females with a single orange band.

**Hosts:** Peach, apricot, plum, prune, nectarine, cherry, almond.

**Life Cycle:** From pupa to adult: 17-35 days. Larvae overwinter under the bark of the host plant, emerging in the spring to resume feeding. The larva pupate at soil level and adult moths may emerge May to September to immediately mate and reproduce. Eggs are laid on the first few inches of trunk or at soil level, and hatch in 10 days. One generation is produced per year in Oklahoma.

**Damage Symptoms:** The cambium and inner bark layers are targeted by the insect. Larger roots and lower trunk damage is evidenced by a viscous seepage, causing declining vitality of plant and susceptibility to other insect damage or disease.

**Control:** Consult this [Oklahoma State University Extension Office Fact Sheet](#) when considering control options for peachtree borers.



## Cutworms

(*Agrotis ipsilon*, *Feltia subterranea*,  
*Peridroma saucia*)

**Appearance:** Adults are moths with a wingspread of 1-2".

Eight species are known to damage turfgrass in Oklahoma; most are gray or brown with lighter or darker markings on the wings. The larvae are caterpillars, and have similar coloration; gray, brown or black with lighter or

darker markings, and reach 1 ½" at maturity..

**Hosts:** Cutworm larvae are general feeders; but their primary host is turfgrass.

**Life Cycle:** The life cycle timing varies depending on the species; some produce only one generation per year, but the most commonly reported - the black cutworm - produces multiple generations in one year. The timing of damage depends on when the larvae emerge and begin feeding; some overwinter and resume feeding early, some overwinter as eggs and develop later. Read this [Oklahoma State University Extension Office Fact Sheet](#) for more information on the many species affecting Oklahoma turfgrasses.

**Damage Symptoms:** Leaves are chewed by the larvae and cut off at the crown. Depending on the species, damage can be noted from February until October, with May being the most prominent time for activity.

**Control:** Consult this [Oklahoma State University Extension Office Fact Sheet](#) when considering control options for cutworms.

Sound, reliable information about these insects and control methods can be found from the Oklahoma Cooperative Extension Service and others through the [links at the end of this article](#).

© 2024, Terri Denney. All rights reserved.

## Resources

[OSU Entoweb: Lace Bugs](#)

[OSU Entoweb: Subterranean Termites \(Swarming\)](#)

[OSU Entoweb: Peachtree Borer](#)

[OSU Entoweb: Cutworms](#)

[EPP-7306: Ornamental and Lawn Pest Control](#)

[HLA-6408: Landscape Maintenance Schedule](#)

[HLA-6434: Biological Pest Controls for the Home Landscape](#)

[EPP 7308: Choosing a Pest Management Company to Protect Your Home Against Termites](#)