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Seasonality, Development and Cultural Control of the Hunting Billbug

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Objective

Identify the billbug species complex present on golf courses in north central and southern Florida and determine how long hunting billbugs require for development.

Summary

Billbugs can severely damage turfgrass by feeding on stems, stolons, and rhizomes. There are 25 species of billbugs in Florida but little is known about the billbug species complex or biology. Expanding the knowledge of billbugs will lead to more effective control strategies.

The composition, abundance and seasonal activity of billbugs on four Florida golf courses were determined weekly by taking 24-hour samples with large linear pitfall traps. Any billbugs caught in the traps were identified to species.

Results

- The hunting billbug is the most abundant and damaging billbug species in warm-season grasses and was the most common species collected on the four golf courses in this study.
- Bermudagrass can tolerate a large hunting billbug population before noticeable damage occurs.
- Proper monitoring and identification of this pest can prevent turf loss and costly renovation.
- Overseeding or planting a pure stand of endophytic turfgrass has a strong likelihood of preventing serious outbreaks of hunting billbugs.



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