

## The Miniature MENACE!

Deep within Florida yards, a legion of predators is on the loose. Armed with dagger-like mouthparts, these assassins pierce each blade of grass with deadly precision, siphoning life from once vibrant lawns. By the time their presence is known only by their calling card – barren patches of dead turf. These saboteurs are the infamous chinch bugs. And while they may be small...their damage is sizable.

St. Augustine is particularly susceptible to chinch bugs infestations, with cultivars such as ProVista being somewhat resistant. But it's important to note that *all cultivars* and species – including Zoysia – can be attacked, and since chinch bugs are active during warm weather, it's a great time to review some defensive strategies.

## Symptoms

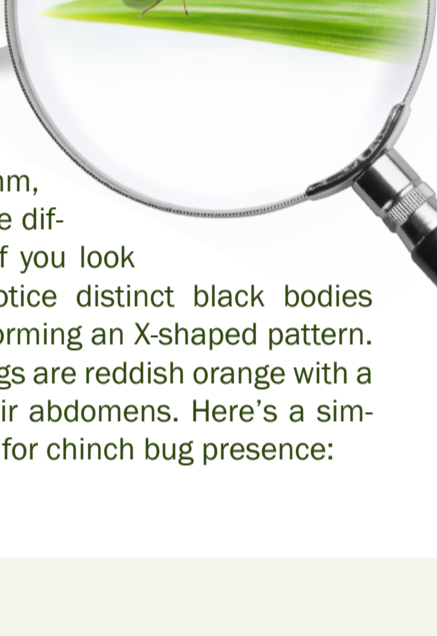
Chinch bugs feed by piercing grass stems and sucking out the sap, which leads to discoloration. They prefer dry, sunny areas, and their damage can resemble drought stress. So, if you're watering a stubborn area and it won't regain its color, chinch bugs may be to blame.

**CHINCH BUG DAMAGE IS SIMILAR TO DROUGHT STRESS, BUT THE AFFECTED AREAS WON'T GREEN UP WHEN WATERED.**



## Identification

**CHINCH BUGS ARE ABOUT THE SIZE OF THE EYE OF A SEWING NEEDLE!**



At only 3-6 mm, chinch bugs can be difficult to see. But if you look carefully, you'll notice distinct black bodies with white wings forming an X-shaped pattern. Juvenile chinch bugs are reddish orange with a white band on their abdomens. Here's a simple method to test for chinch bug presence:



**TAKE A LARGE METAL CAN OR PLASTIC JUG AND REMOVE THE TOP AND BOTTOM.**



**PRESS THE CAN FIRMLY INTO THE GROUND JUST OUTSIDE THE AFFECTED AREA AND FILL NEARLY TO THE BRIM WITH WATER.**



**MAINTAIN THE WATER LEVEL FOR TEN MINUTES, ADDING MORE IF NECESSARY.**



**COLLECT AND EXAMINE ANY SMALL INSECTS THAT FLOAT TO THE TOP.**

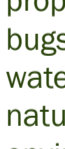
## Control



If you're trying your hand at chemical control, look for products containing the active ingredients Cyfluthrin, Bifenthrin, or Lambda-Cyhalothrin. Diatomaceous earth can also work if applied properly, just be sure to follow label instructions carefully.

If you're using Deans, chinch bug control is included in your lawn program. We'll inspect for symptoms of activity with each visit and treat as needed. However, even with a professional program, how you care for your lawn will play a large part in chinch bug prevention.

## A Natural Defense



It may seem simple, but the best defense against chinch bugs invasion is proper watering. This is because chinch bugs love hot, dry environments. When you water thoroughly, you help your lawn build its natural defenses and create an inhospitable environment for invading chinch bugs.

Watering is also important because the products used to target chinch bugs are systemic, meaning they need to be absorbed by the plant's tissues. By watering your lawn correctly, you help these tissues absorb the protective product. This step is particularly important for slower-growing cultivars like ProVista.

Apply 0.75 inches of water three times per week to hydrate and watch for folded grass blades or dull turf color. When these drought stress symptoms appear, your lawn is especially vulnerable to chinch bug attack.

## Fertilize Properly

Proper fertilization creates a more pest-resistant lawn. However, if you're a DIYer, be careful not to over-apply nitrogen, as this can lead to excess thatch which helps chinch bugs thrive. We recommend a slow-release nitrogen like the type used in our professional program.

When you use Deans, you'll get a comprehensive fertilizer and pest control program to help keep chinch bugs, weeds, and a host of other pernicious pests from making your lawn their next victim!

