

Over the last couple of months (Jul, Aug) a customer of mine had complained about a large yellow grasshopper that I had never encountered before in south central MS. When I came across these they were usually in pairs and they had eaten a lot of herbaceous plant material or new soft plant tissue in most cases. I contacted Dr. Blake Layton, an entomologist with MSU and submitted the photo below for identification. Dr. Layton was kind enough to reply back with the response included at the bottom of this article.



The larger female is apx. 3" in length. Dr. Layton's response is below.

This is the eastern lubber grasshopper, *Romalea microptera*. Because they are flightless, these large grasshoppers have a very spotty distribution. One person may have them in their lawn in large numbers while their friend who lives three blocks away has never seen them before. When there are only a few they are interesting miniature wildlife, but when present in large numbers they can be significant pests, and will eat things like amyrrillis leaves that other insects do not damage. They are difficult to control, but a direct spray with a pyrethroid insecticide, like Bifenthrin (Ortho) or cyfluthrin (Bayer) will kill them. They are easiest to kill when found in clusters of young or newly hatched nymphs. But they are already past that point for this year. For heavy, widespread infestations it can help to just spray the lawn/landscape with one of the above products in a hose-end sprayer--some of these come in a ready-to-use hose-end sprayer.

There is only one generation per year. After mating, the females will deposit pods of eggs in the soil and this is the overwintering stage.

Hand-picking and dropping in a bucket of soapy water is another way to control them.

Blake Layton, Ph.D.

Extension Entomology Specialist

Department of Entomology

Box 9775,

Mississippi State, MS 39762