

Cinch Bugs



False cinch bug, *Nysius* sp. Photo courtesy of Robert Webster, Wikipedia.



Migrating false cinch bugs. Photo by Surendra Dara, <https://ucanr.edu/blogs/strawberries-vegetables/index.cfm?tagname=False%20cinch%20bug%20in%20strawberries>.

Two different groups of true bugs in the family Lygaeidae are referred to as cinch bugs, including the false cinch bug and true cinch bug. Both species feed on grass and grass seeds.

The false cinch bug, or *Nysius raphanus* in the true bug family Lygaeidae, is generally found in grassy or weedy fields and pastures. Adults and nymphs feed on a variety of plants, but particularly favor mustards and their relatives. These are small grayish to black insects averaging about 1/6th of an inch in length.

Outbreaks of huge numbers individuals can occur in the

vicinity of fields during hot, dry summers following cool wet springs. They migrate away from the field looking for moisture and cooler temperatures, and will move *en mass* into adjacent areas with green plants and irrigation, as well as into homes. These migrations generally last only about one week. False cinch bugs are harmless, and cannot bite or damage anything inside a building. They will ultimately die indoors. A vacuum cleaner is the best control method indoors as this insect is largely resistant to most commonly used insecticides. Other possibilities are to create a moist area away from the home/garden, such as a long a property line or a water filled moat separating the source of the migrating insects (the field) from homeowner's properties.

True cinch bugs in the genus *Blissus* feed on grasses and can be a problem in turf grass, such as Bermuda grass, buffalo grass and zoysia. However, only St. Augustine grass is seriously damaged. This bug is primarily a pest in southern California.



True cinch bug, *Blissus leucopterus*. Photo courtesy of Graham Montgomery.



Turf grass damaged by cinch bug feeding.