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Problem: Juniper Webworm

Host Plants: Juniper

Description: This webworm frequently attacks Juniper foliage in central and western Kansas. While exact time for moth emergence and egg laying have not been defined for Kansas, both probably occur in late May through mid-June. Small larvae go unnoticed due to their initial leaf tunneling activities followed by surface feeding in thick inner foliage during summer and fall.

Several larvae will gather together and construct the nests in which they overwinter. Overwintered larvae resume their feeding and development in early spring, during which time they produce thick webbing. Larvae pupate during late spring. Moths emerge to initiate a repeat of the cycle. There is one generation per year.

Recommendations: Often natural parasites keep this insect under control. If not, homeowners should consider direct control measures to preserve the appearance of landscape and windbreak plantings. Removal of infested branch tips can be effective on individual trees. If the problem is widespread, it may be more feasible to use insecticide applications to kill newly emerged larvae before they become protected within silken shelters. Timing will depend on moth activities. Moths are small and inactive during the day. But when branches are shaken, moths briefly flit about before settling down. Initiate insecticide applications when moths are detected. Insecticides registered for use against caterpillars, defoliating caterpillars and/or webworms would qualify for use against Juniper webworms. Examples include spinosad (Conserve, Monterey Garden Insect Spray, Captain Jack's Dead Bug Brew, Natural Guard Spinosad), acephate (Acephate, Orthene, Bonide Systemic Insect Control), cyfluthrin (Tempo, BioAdvanced Tomato & Vegetable Insect Killer) and permethrin (Hi-Yield 38 Plus Turf, Termite & Ornamental Insect Spray; Hi-Yield Garden & Farm Insect Control).

References:

1. Juniper Webworm, North Carolina State Extension, NC State Extension Publications

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