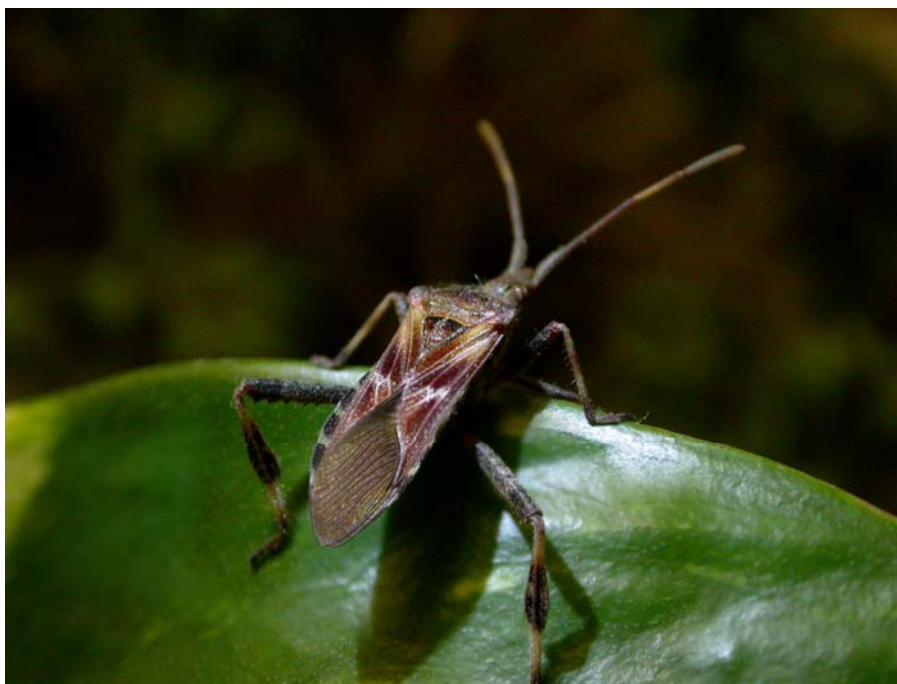


Western Conifer Seed Bug

Leptoglossus occidentalis (Hemiptera, Coreidae)



Adult *Leptoglossus occidentalis* © Bob Ford www.natureportfolio.com

Pest Distribution: The Western conifer seed bug is considered a severe pest of conifer seed orchards in North America where it is native. The insect was discovered in Italy in 1999, the first European record. It has since spread into Switzerland- 2002, Slovenia, Croatia & Spain –2004; Hungary – 2005; Austria – 2006; France, Germany, Hungary, The Netherlands, Czech Republic & Belgium - 2007). One record from the UK in 2007 (20701330).

Host plants: The bug feeds on the developing cones and seeds of over 30 species of conifer trees, including white pine (*Pinus strobus*), red pine (*Pinus resinosa*), Scots pine (*Pinus sylvestris*), Austrian pine (*Pinus nigra*), mugo pine (*Pinus mugo*), lodgepole pine (*Pinus contorta*), white spruce (*Picea glauca*) and Douglas-fir (*Pseudotsuga menziesii*). They do not feed on the foliage.

Recognition: *Leptoglossus occidentalis* is a member of the family Coreidae, the leaf-footed bugs. As such, it has the characteristic swellings of the hind tibia. The adults are 1.5 - 2.0 cm. long and 0.5 - 0.7 cm in wide. Most of their body varies in colour from a reddish brown to a grey brown, and adults have a distinctive inverted white V marking on the forewing.

Life Cycle: Adults lay small barrel-shaped eggs on the foliage in mid to late spring which hatch after approximately 10 days. The immature nymphs go through five stages of development before becoming adults in late August. Adults usually aggregate under peeled bark and in bird and rodent nests to overwinter. In parts of the North America the insect is a household nuisance because it has the habit of entering buildings to over winter.

Damage: No external damage is visible on the cones. Both adult and nymph stages insert their long proboscises into cones to extract nutrients from the seeds. This bug causes significant losses to plantations in the western United States. Heavy feeding has been known to cause up to 41% loss of seed crop in Douglas-fir.

Please report any findings of this pest to your local Plant Health and Seeds Inspector (Defra), Glyn Jones (Tel: 01823 348442) or to PHSI Headquarters, York (Tel: 01904 455174)

Compiled by Sharon Reid 25, January 2007. Updated Nov. 2007.