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Have you seen this monster grasshopper?

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Abstract

In 1936, corn producers in western Iowa did not have European corn borers or corn rootworms to battle; these pests had not yet migrated to Iowa. But some cornfields in Plymouth County were being attacked by a monster-sized insect known as the plains lubber grasshopper.

Keywords

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Disciplines

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INTEGRATED CROP MANAGEMENT

Have you seen this monster grasshopper?

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The plains lubber grasshopper was last reported near Sioux City, Iowa in 1936.

[Enlarge](#) [1]



The common differential grasshopper is dwarfed by the 2 1/2-inch-long lubber grasshopper.

[Enlarge](#) [2]

The plains lubber grasshopper is native to Iowa and is 2 1/8 inches in length when full grown, and it is considerably larger than the common differential grasshopper. It is a striking insect with bold green, pink, and black coloration. The adults cannot fly because they have only short, round wings. Plains lubber grasshoppers occur from Montana south through the central and western Great Plains into Mexico. They have been recorded from Crawford, Plymouth, Pottawattamie, and Woodbury counties in Iowa. They inhabit prairies and also are found along roadsides, field edges, and disturbed pastures. Common sunflower is a favorite food of the plains lubber grasshopper.

Specimens in the Iowa State Insect Collection in Ames show that on July 25, 1936, 23 lubber grasshoppers were collected in Plymouth County and some were taken on corn. As far as I know, this record is the last record of this insect in Iowa. It seems to have vanished from the state.

I am curious as to the nature of the damage this insect caused to corn nearly 70 years ago and what has happened to the insect since that time. If you know of someone that has experienced crop damage from the plains lubber grasshopper in Iowa (either historically or recently) or have seen the plains lubber grasshopper in Iowa in recent years, please contact me with the details. Your comments would be greatly appreciated. You may contact me at merice@iastate.edu [3].

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<http://www.ipm.iastate.edu/ipm/icm//ipm/icm/2003/7-21-2003/lubber.html>

Links:

[1] <http://www.ent.iastate.edu/imagegal/orthoptera/lubber.html>

[2] <http://www.ent.iastate.edu/imagegal/orthoptera/lubber-differential.html>

[3] <http://www.ipm.iastate.edu/ipm/icm/mailto:merice@iastate.edu>

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