

HOT NEWS

LITTLE, WHITE "GNATS" ARE EVERYWHERE

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In recent days, many Indiana residents have noticed small gnat-like insects flying around their yards, parks and gardens. Upon closer inspection, the insects are greenish-yellow with small black "tailpipes" at the back end. These are actually not gnats or flies, but are the winged form of the soybean aphid (*Aphis glycines*), a familiar pest to soybean growers. This year, we seem to have more of these winged aphids than usual - probably due to the fact that aphids built up their numbers late in the year and therefore were not treated with insecticides.

In late summer and early fall, as soybeans begin to yellow and die, winged soybean aphids take flight in search of their overwintering host, a common introduced roadside shrub called buckthorn (*Rhamnus cathartica*). They will mate and lay eggs on this shrub in the fall. Those eggs hatch in the spring and develop through a couple of generations until developing a winged form again in April and May that will fly to the young, newly planted soybeans around the state. Soybeans provide food throughout the summer until the cycle repeats itself as fall approaches.

The host range of the soybean aphid is restricted to these two plants, so homeowners and gardeners do not need to be concerned about these winged forms - they may land on various other plants, but will not be able to feed or develop

on them. They are primarily a nuisance (more so in areas with an abundance of soybean and/or buckthorn) and their numbers should subside by the end of September.



Close-up of soybean aphids on underside of buckthorn leaf



Buckthorn branch with black fruit and soybean aphids on leaves



Video clip of aphids flying during fall migration to buckthorn trees.