Field Notes
April 25, 2008
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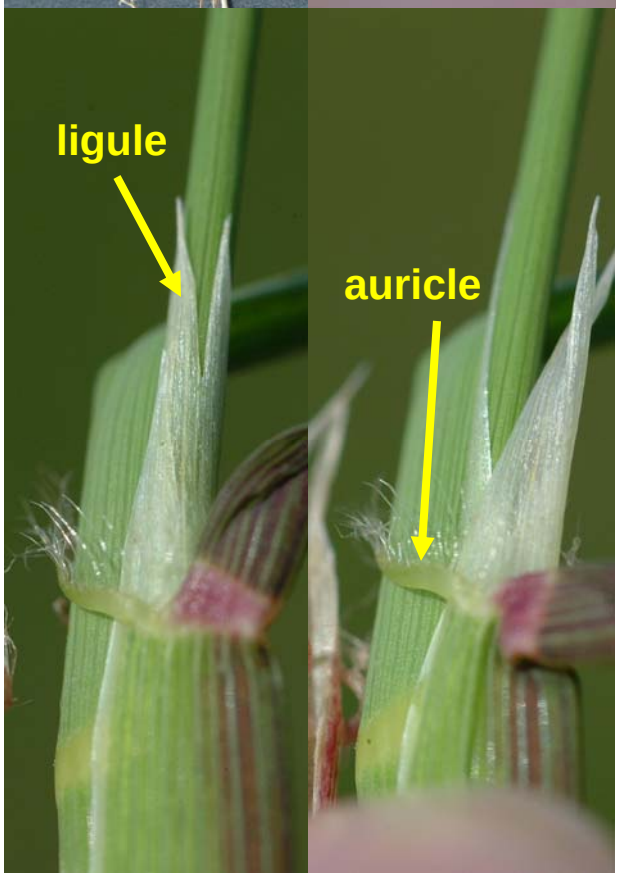
The photographs below tell the story of the effects of rising temperatures over the last week. The field in Jeff Davis parish where we were concerned about zinc deficiency really changed as you can see in the left hand photograph. In the photograph at the right the leaves lying on the water are the same leaves that were stretched out on the surface last week. Stretched leaves will not shrink. The upright leaves are new leaves. Their color is good, bronzing symptoms have all but disappeared except in areas where water is still a little too deep. Weed control remains excellent and no new appearance of rice water weevils is apparent.

The series of 4 photographs on the next page show the differences between broadleaf signalgrass on the left and crabgrass on the right. Dr. Eric Webster took a look at these photographs and feels confident the plants on the left are broadleaf Signalgrass based on the ligule which is not long enough to be fall Panicum and the purpling on the leaf sheath. The right two he said are clearly crabgrass because of the membranous ligule. He said he could not determine if they were of southern or large crabgrass.

I apologize for the confusion for those of you who have the earlier edition, please disregard it.



The two photographs at left present a puzzle. In the first photograph the ligule is typical of sprangletop, but according to the weed id schematic, sprangletop has no auricles. When I checked a grass key it indicated one of the lesser known, but steadily increasing Leptochloa species (especially in Texas) is Nealley sprangletop (*Leptochloa nealleyi*). This species of sprangletop does have auricles. Until seed heads are produced we cannot be sure, but until so we will treat it as sprangletop when considering herbicide choices. It also helps to know that this species has been documented in vicinity of the field in Vermilion parish where we found it. The split ligule is very indicative of sprangletop. The auricles are an exception.

The photographs above are of either Creeping Spotflower (*Spilanthes americana*) or Lippia (*Lippia lanceolata*). Both are perennial weeds found in several locations, but especially in the area near the Atchafalaya River in south Louisiana. The color is a little off in response to Command herbicide applied a couple of weeks prior to taking the pictures. The plant looks a little like Eclipta and a little like vervane. The appressed (flattened) pubescence and nearly square stem makes me lean toward Lippia even though I first thought it was Spotflower. Magnified photographs are better than old eyes. Weed control is probably going to be same either way, but we will not decide on that until we see what else comes up following our last flushing. The similarity of these two weeds and their uncommon frequency leaves me stymied until we get a little more growth or flowers or both.

We had to give in and recommend small doses of nitrogen to be followed by flushing or rainfall on several fields because the crops just were not moving. We had intended to avoid these "starter" nitrogen applications because of the cost of fertilizer this year. We are about a week later in establishing permanent flood than we would like to be at this point.

Last week Drs. Hummel and Levy (Extension Entomologist and County Agent respectively) visited a field in Acadia parish where they found chinch bug nymphs. These are likely first or second instar insects based on their size. At left is a rice seedling with one of the nymphs. In the middle is a closer view of one of the nymphs and at right a pair of adults mating. The last photograph was taken in 2004. According to Dr. Hummel no adults were observed in the field. Several factors probably contributed to their presence: an increase in drilled or dry seeded rice, the large acreage of wheat and relatively dry conditions to this point. Once rice fields are flooded chinch bugs are usually only a casual insect, not a problem. I have observed them moving out of maturing ryegrass and into flooded rice, but usually they only move a few feet into the field in those situations. If they are going to cause a problem it is on seedling rice where they feed at or just below the soil line. Under those conditions stand reduction can be mild to severe. The easiest way to control them is to flood the field. Even flushing seems to help. It is difficult to get insecticides to the insect. If anyone has Dermacor treated fields that develop a

chinch bug problem Dr. Hummel would like to know or if there are chinch bugs causing problems in areas not treated with Dermacor, but not in the treated areas she would like to know that too. She is trying to determine the efficacy of this new insecticide on chinch bugs and other pests not currently on the label. Unfortunately, this type of information is difficult to generate in small plots given the unpredictability of their occurrence.

Above left is a photograph showing the effect of Permit on grasses. Dr. Webster is investigating the effect of Permit on grasses after having observed preemerge activity of it in some of his plots last year. It is not labeled as a grass material, but like Londax apparently has some grass activity.

As of Thursday morning, the Mississippi River at Natchez/Vidalia was still rising. It was supposed to have crested on April 15th.