

# IN THE NEWS

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Battle River Implements Agronomy Newsletter

Complimentary

## Who will be "bugging" us this year?

### BATTLE RIVER IMPLEMENTS

### AGRONOMY UPDATE APRIL 2017

Every year, the good people at the Alberta Insect Pest Monitoring Network are busy in our fields, trying to stay ahead of what the current insect issues and threats for our crops are. They monitor not only what is happening in the current year, but try to project out into the upcoming season - sort of an early warning system on what to be on the lookout for. What they are finding and where they are finding it is all compiled on a great website that should be mandatory



viewing for every farmer prior to spring. If you want all the details on what they are up to, follow this link; [http://www1.agric.gov.ab.ca/\\$department/deptdocs.nsf/all/prm13779](http://www1.agric.gov.ab.ca/$department/deptdocs.nsf/all/prm13779). You will see that they not only tell you what they are finding out there, they encourage you to participate. The more people that are reporting back to the network, the more valuable this tool becomes, so take a minute share if you find something unusual

in your fields. It helps them to do their job, which is helping us!

So all that being said, for those who want the short hand version of what to expect in 2017, I am going to share some of the forecast maps from the Network to give you an overview of what we need to be on the lookout for this year.

### Pea Leaf Weevil

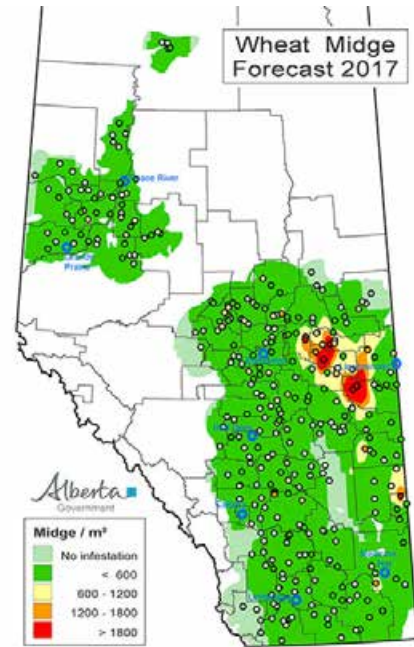
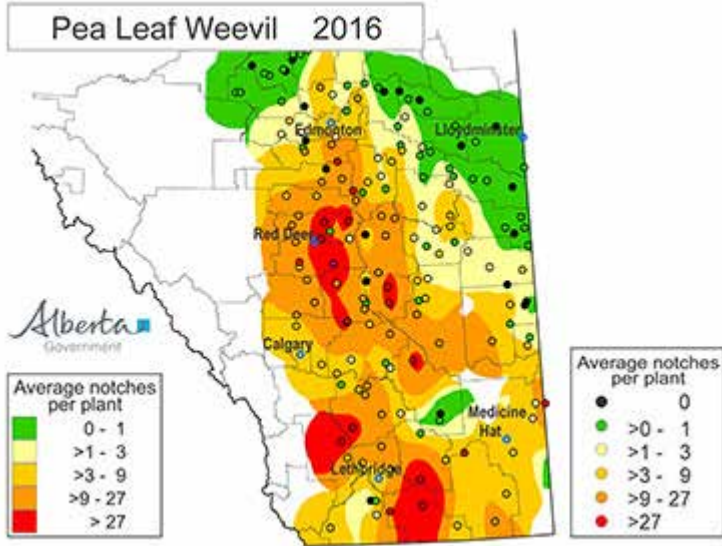


We will start with the new kid on the block who is likely to give us trouble this spring. Last spring it was possible to see the characteristic leaf notching in many fields and as the summer went on, I started catching more and more of the adult pea leaf weevils in my insect net sweeps. The survey map from Alberta Ag shows how serious a problem this could be for pulse growers in 2017

I strongly urge everybody to follow the link above and learn more about the lifecycle of this pest. It looks like it could be

a real issue for some of the area growers this year. The only effective control method is seed treatment, so the decision on whether to invest in controlling the population has to be made prior to seeding!

the north east corner of Flagstaff County. So if you farm in that area, this is going to be a pest of concern for you. For the rest of you, don't relax too much! These insects are very much hit and miss in where it will cause trouble, and even if the map shows



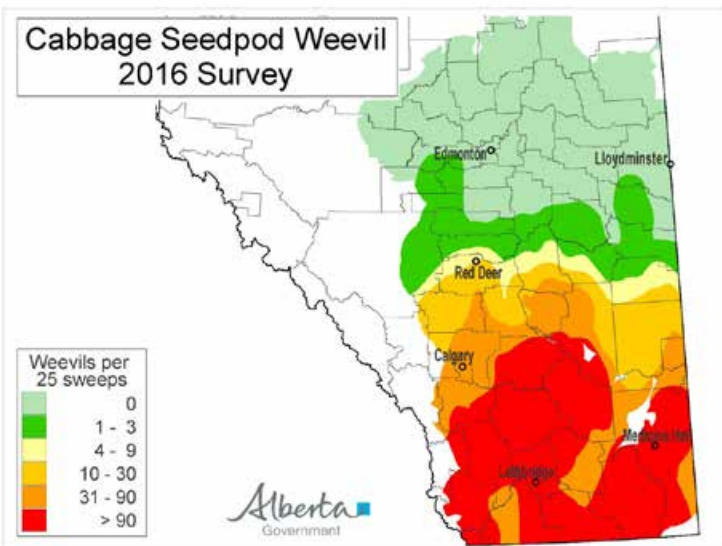
## Cabbage Seed Pod Weevil



This insect has been making a steady march northward over the last 5 years and has now advanced to the point where anybody south of a line drawn from Red Deer to Consort should be scouting their fields to determine if they need to treat for it. I fully expect to find Cabbage Seed Pod Weevils north of the Battle River for the first time this summer.

your risk is low, it is still possible to have small localized pockets of Midge that can cause a lot of damage.

So that takes care of the 3 most pressing insect populations that are likely to affect us in the coming season. The Alberta Insect Pest Monitoring Network also did surveys on several other insects in 2016, including Bertha Army Worms, Wheat Stem Sawfly, and Grasshoppers. None of these look to be a major issue for our area this summer, but for those looking for further information, everything you need to know is available on the Alberta Ag website.



## A Brand New Pest!



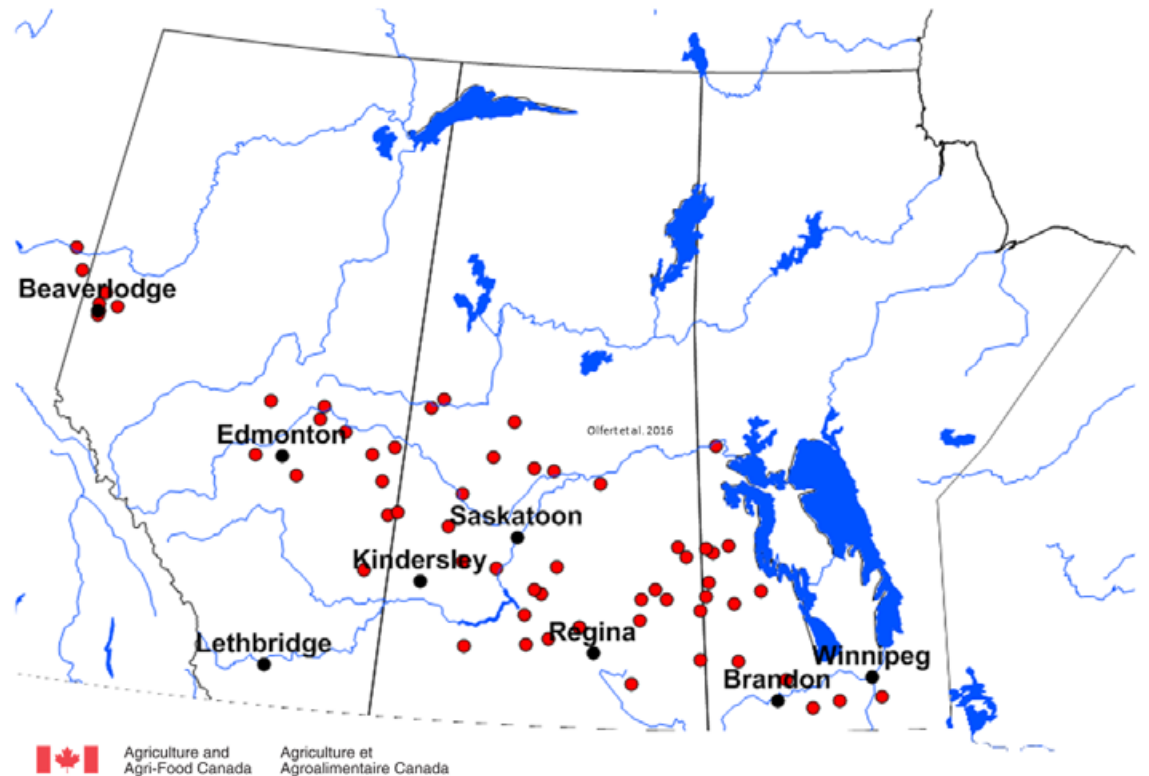
The last thing I would like to bring to everybody's attention is the emergence of a new insect pest for canola that was just identified after the end of the 2016 growing season. In years past a new midge species called "Swede Midge" was identified as a growing issue in Canada. It was first identified in Ontario in 2000 and had spread to Saskatchewan by 2007. The damage from Swede Midge occurs in the larval stage, where they feed on rapidly growing tissue in the canola. Larval feeding at an early plant stage can stop the main stem from developing – at later stages it leads to fused flowers and aborted pods. As there are concerns about the impact this insect may have on Prairie canola production, Agriculture Canada has implemented a monitoring program using pheromone baited traps to capture and count the adults (similar in concept to how we track Bertha Army Worms).

## Orange Blossom Wheat Midge



While the wheat midge forecast map overall for Alberta looks good, there is one hotspot on the map. Unfortunately it is just on

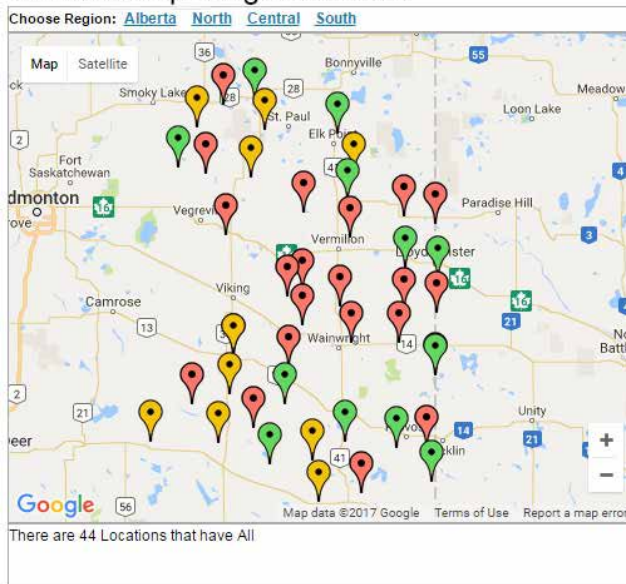
In 2016, the map looked like this;



They put out 62 trap sites across Western Canada and did not have a single site record midge activity. This should be good news, right? Not so fast. At the same time that there was no activity at the traps, Alberta Ag entomologists were recording damage to canola that looked very much like Swede Midge injury. That map showed the following results;

So there were no Swede Midge being captured in the pheromone traps, yet there was midge like damage showing up throughout east central Alberta. In several fields they were able to capture midge. They sent those away for identification and found an as of yet unnamed species that is closely related to Swede Midge, but appears to be a distinct species. Work is now under way to learn how this species is the same as Swede Midge and how it is different. In the meantime, all we can do is monitor our fields for the pest. So far, the only damage that researchers have confirmed that this new species does is to cause the formation of bottle shaped galled flowers.

### Contarinia sp midge in canola



#### Legend

- No Contarinia sp midge found
- Suspect damage due to Contarinia sp midge
- Contarinia sp midge found





*Bell Flower containing swede midge larvae.*

The damage caused is identical to that seen from Swede Midge, which accounts for the confusion when it came to identifying the new species.

Remember as we head into spring that there are a host of other insects that we need to be aware of. Flea Beetles, Wireworms, Cutworms, Diamondback Moths and Cereal Leaf Beetles are just a few of the pests that can cause a lot of damage in a short time if we let them go undetected. Scouting your fields is essential to ensuring a profitable year of farming and the Alberta Insect Pest Monitoring Network is a valuable resource for you. I highly recommend following Scott Meers and Shelley Barkley on twitter. They administer the website and they also do weekly Agbug Chats that keep you up to date on what is happening around Alberta throughout the growing season. They are also very generous with their time and take pride on tracking down answers for any and all questions.

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