EENY066

UF UNIVERSITY of FLORIDA
IFAS Extension

Sand Field Cricket, *Gryllus firmus* Scudder (Insecta: Orthoptera: Gryllidae)[1]

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Introduction

This species is the common chirping field cricket of lawns, pastures, and roadsides throughout Florida.

For information on other Florida field and house crickets see: http://entomology.ifas.ufl.edu/creatures.

Distribution

Sand field crickets occur throughout the southeastern United States. To the north and west the species is replaced by the fall field cricket (*Gryllus pennsylvanicus*). In areas of contact the two hybridize to a minor extent.

Identification

The sand field cricket and the southeastern or southwestern field cricket often occur together and may be difficult to distinguish except by song. The easiest morphological means of telling the two apart is the color pattern on the forewings (http://entomology.ifas.ufl.edu/creatures). For males, the number and spacing of the teeth in the stridulatory file (http://entomology.ifas.ufl.edu/creatures) is definitive.

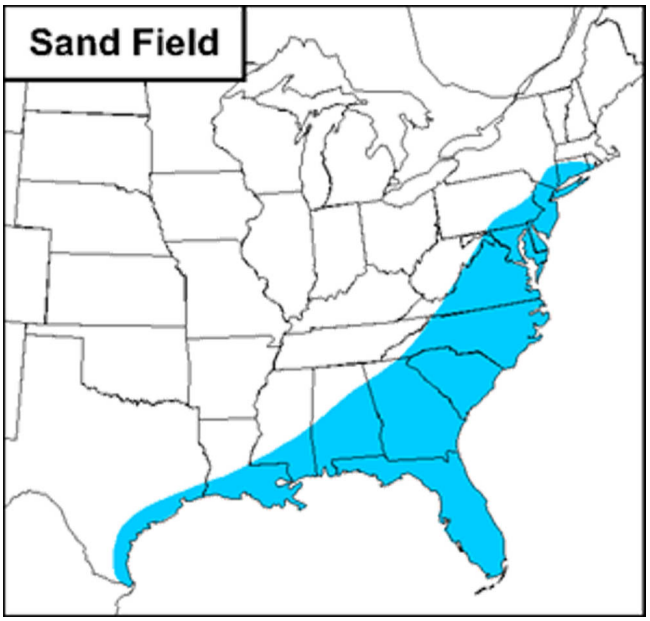

Figure 1. Distribution of sand field cricket in the United States. Credits:

In southern Florida, where sand and Jamaican field crickets co-occur, the color pattern of the head (http://entomology.ifas.ufl.edu/creatures) will separate the two.

1. This document is EENY-066, one of a series of Featured Creatures from the Entomology and Nematology Department, Florida Cooperative Extension Service, Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences, University of Florida. Published: January 1999. Reviewed: March 2011. This document is also available on Featured Creatures website at **http://entomology.ifas.ufl.edu/creatures**. Please visit the EDIS website at **http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu**. Additional information on these organisms, including many color photographs, is available at the Entomology and Nematology Department website at **http://entnemdept.ifas.ufl.edu/**.

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Figure 2. Sand field cricket, *Gryllus firmus* (Scudder), short-winged male. Credits: Paul M. Choate, University of Florida

Figure 3. Sand field cricket, *Gryllus firmus* (Scudder), short-winged female. Credits: Paul M. Choate, University of Florida

Life Cycle

Sand field crickets have the most variable life cycle known for field crickets. During much of the year females lay some eggs that hatch within a few weeks at room temperatures and other eggs that take a month or two to hatch under the same conditions. Furthermore, if potentially quick-hatching eggs are exposed to cool temperatures, some lose that potential. Nymphal development is also variable with some developing quickly and some much more slowly, even when exposed to the same conditions. The effect of all this is that a female s progeny may mature over a 10-month period, with slow developers maturing at the same time as some of the progeny of their faster-developing sibs. In spite of the variability, there are peaks of adults in late spring (mostly from over-wintering eggs) and in fall (mostly from fast-developing progeny of spring adults).

Habitat

This species is characteristic of lawns, pastures, and roadsides, especially those that are well drained and sandy.

Song

The calling song (689Kb wav file) is a series of slow-pulsed chirps, with a chirp rate of about two per second. Most chirps have four pulses, with the initial one being much weaker than the rest (graphs).

Selected References

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