

Pest Profile



Photo Credit: John Capinera, University of Florida, Bugwood.org; Joseph Berger, Bugwood.org

Common Name: Armyworm, “true armyworm”

Scientific Name: *Pseudaletia unipuncta*

Order and Family: Lepidoptera, Noctuidae

Size and Appearance: The moth is pale brown and has a prominent white dot near the center of the front wing, and has a wing-spread of about an inch and a half.

| | Length (mm) | Appearance |
|-----------------------------|---------------|--|
| Egg | 0.4-0.7mm | Eggs are white or yellowish in color and spherical shaped; turn gray right before they hatch; laid in clusters on protected areas on plants; females can lay masses of 100 eggs; hatch in 1-2 weeks. |
| Larva/Nymph | 4-35mm | Vary in color from dark greenish-brown, grayish green, or grayish brown; larvae have longitudinal stripes that are pale white, orange and dark brown along their bodies; head has distinct dark net-like markings and is yellowish or yellow-brown in color; have a dark band on each proleg (not true legs); larvae have 6 instars. |
| Adult | 40mm wingspan | Pale brown in color; forewing has prominent white dot in center; hindwing is grayish; nocturnal. |
| Pupa (if applicable) | 13-17mm | Yellowish brown at first, changing to mahogany brown in color; pair of hooks are on tip of abdomen; pupa stage lasts 14-40 days depending on season. |

Type of feeder (Chewing, sucking, etc.): Larvae: Chewing; Adults: siphoning

Hosts Plants: Armyworms will feed on grass plants and will eventually chew a majority of the foliage off. Some hosts include barley, corn, millet, oats, rye, rice, sorghum, sugarcane, wheat, and wild and weed grasses. Larvae may also feed on carrot, bean, alfalfa, cabbage, cucumber, lettuce, pea, pepper, and sweet potato.

Description of Damage: Larvae feeding causes skeletonization of foliage when they are young. Older larvae can eat holes in the leaves and whole leaves. The armyworm will eat the plant leaves all the way down to the midrib. Armyworms can migrate to a different area in large numbers if their food is consumed. Adults will feed on nectar of flowers and decaying fruit.

References:

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