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EC71-1527 Sod Webworm

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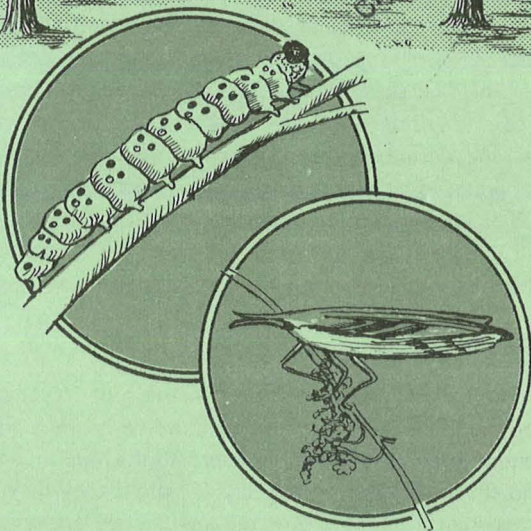
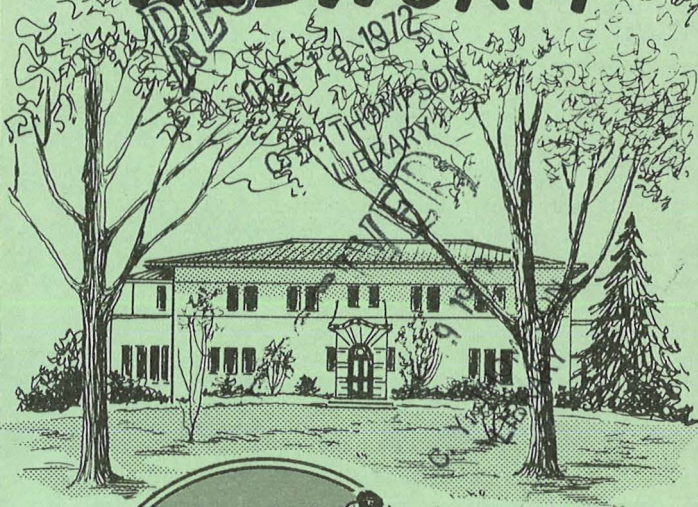
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E.C. 71-1527

SOD WEBWORM



Extension Service
University of Nebraska-Lincoln College of Agriculture Cooperating with the
U. S. Department of Agriculture and the College of Home Economics
E. F. Frolik, Dean J. L. Adams, Director

SOD WEBWORM

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Description

Adult sod webworms are greyish-tan "millers" about 1/2 to 3/4 inch long with a "snout" projecting from the head. At rest they fold their wings around the body, giving them a cylindrical appearance.

Mature larvae are about 3/4 inch long, greyish-brown with small dark spots.

Damage

Adults do not feed on grass. Larvae feed at night on grass leaves near the soil level, hiding in soil or thatch during the day. They may spin silken webs, and as they grow form silken tunnels close to the soil surface.

The first sign of damage is usually irregular brown spots. If infestations are severe, areas of turf may become completely brown. Continued feeding may kill grass, especially during summer heat and drought stress. Larvae may be present from early spring until fall but most serious injury will occur from mid-June until September. They will attack most lawn grasses.

Life History

Sod webworms overwinter in the soil. First larval activity may be found in April and early May. First generation adults emerge in May. Adults hide in lawns and shrubbery during the day. At night they fly over grass, scattering eggs over the lawn. They are readily attracted to lights.

Eggs hatch in about one week and larvae begin feeding soon after hatching. The life cycle is probably completed in three to four weeks. There are several generations each year and all stages are present during the late spring and summer.

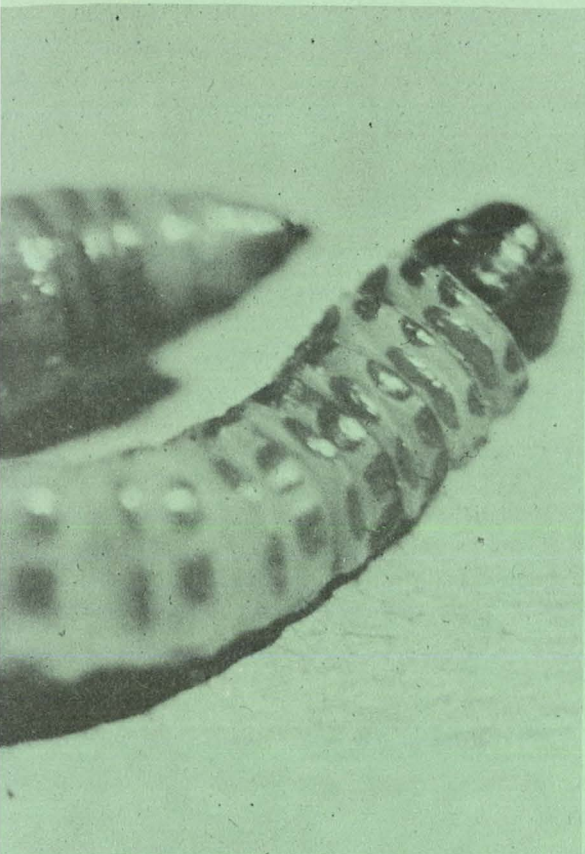


Detecting Larvae

If sod webworm injury is suspected, examine grass near the soil surface for evidence of feeding. Grass will be chewed at or just above the soil. Fresh clippings are usually present. Look for green fecal pellets. Examine thatch and about one inch in the soil for larvae and silken tubes or webbing.

Sod webworms can be brought to the surface by application of one tablespoon of 1% pyrethrins (Pyrenone or Detectar) in two gallons of water on one square yard of lawn area. Pyrethrins irritate webworms, causing them to squirm to the surface in 5 to 10 minutes. If 15 or more larvae are found per square yard, control may be desirable.

If no evidence of feeding or larvae is found, the



problem is due to some other cause and insecticides would be of no value.

Control

When control is necessary, the following steps may help assure satisfactory results with any insecticide used:

1. Be certain sod webworms are the primary problem.
2. Mow the lawn before application and remove clippings.
3. Water thoroughly in the afternoon.
4. Apply an insecticide in the late afternoon or early evening.
5. Water lightly to wash the insecticide off grass

blades into the turf.

One of the insecticides in Table 1 is suggested:

Table 1. Insecticides for sod webworms.

Material	Amt./m sq ft	Material	Amt./m sq ft
Ethion 5% granules	5 lbs	Diazinon 14% G	1 ½ lbs
Dursban 0.5% granules	5 lbs	Diazinon 25% EC	½ cup
Dursban 22% EC	2 oz	Dylox 50% SP	4 oz
Sevin 5% granules	5 lbs	Zectran 22% EC	3 oz
Sevin 50% WP	7 oz	Ethion 4 EC	6 oz

Apply sprays with a hose-end sprayer or power sprayer, using 10 to 15 gallons of water per 1000 square feet. Granules can be applied with fertilizer applicators. If granules are used, sprinkle after application to increase coverage on the soil surface and wash insecticide off grass blades.

Caution: All insecticides are poisonous, must be handled with care and stored out of reach of children. Keep children and pets off treated lawns until sprays have dried. Never allow sprays to puddle as birds or pets may be injured.

Damage Similar to Webworm

Some lawn diseases cause brown patches in the lawn that appear much like webworm injury. White grubs will kill grass by feeding on roots and can be mistaken for webworm damage. White grub injury can be recognized by the absence of roots. Usually grubs can be found by examining the soil at the edge of brown areas. Grubs are white with a brown head and curved like the letter "C".

Heat injury is often mistaken for webworm damage, especially if lawn is dry. Grass with shallow roots in thatch or growing on clay is subject to heat and drought injury which is often mistaken for webworm damage.

Always Be Sure Webworms Are the Problem

Often lawns are sprayed with an insecticide when water probably would be of greater benefit. Well watered, properly fertilized and carefully managed lawns will tolerate many more sod webworms than neglected and mismanaged turf.



Use Pesticides Safely
FOLLOW THE LABEL

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

.. Store in original labeled containers out of the reach of children.

.. Eliminate empty container hazards—

Rinse empty metal, glass, and plastic jugs and cans. Two rinsings remove 95% of the removable pesticide. Then place in the garbage or bury.