

LAWN INSECTS

TITLE:	SOD WEBWORM
ORDER:	<i>Lepidoptera</i>
FAMILY:	<i>Crambidae</i>
LATIN NAME:	<i>Pediasia trisecta</i>
OVERALL DESCRIPTION (Lifecycle):	
<p>Sod webworms are a family of about 20 species that infest turf grass. Sod webworms feed on most turf grasses including bluegrass, bentgrass, tall and fine-leaved fescues, zoysia grass and buffalo grass. Partially grown larvae overwinter in silk-lined tunnels in the thatch and soil. In most years, larval activity resumes in April or early May. Webworms complete development, pupate and emerge as adults from mid-May to mid-June.</p>	
ANTENNAE:	Yes
WINGS:	Yes (in moth stage)
LEGS (number):	Up to 12 pairs.
OTHER IDENTIFYING FEATURES	Larvae are “buff-colored” about ½ to ¾ inches long. Caterpillars are gray to tan with small dark spots, reaching ¾ to 1 inch.
TYPES OF DAMAGE	One of the first signs of webworm infestation is small, ragged brown spots in the turf. As webworms continue to grow and feed, injured areas enlarge and coalesce. Large areas of turf can be defoliated and even killed during periods of summer heat and drought. While sod webworm larvae are active from early spring through fall, the most serious turf grass injury usually occurs in mid to late summer.



Source: University of Nebrasks-Lincoln



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Source: Michigan State University

KEY MESSAGE TO HOMEOWNER	Webworm moths hide out of sight in shrubbery during the day. An early sign of potential infestation is sod webworm moths zig-zagging over the turf at dusk. If a sod webworm infestation is suspected, closely examine the turf for evidence of insect activity. Small patches of grass will be chewed off at ground level.
BIOLOGICAL CONTROL:	Unfortunately, by the time damage is noticeable, the larvae are not susceptible to <i>Bacillus thuringiensis (Bt)</i> which is a biological control.
CULTURAL CONTROL:	Well-maintained turfgrass is relatively resistant to webworm damage. Mow the lawn regularly but make sure to set the mower at the recommended height for the grass species. Do not over-fertilize the grass with nitrogen, which may enhance the growth of the grass and thatch accumulation near the soil. Greater grass growth and thatch accumulation can ultimately increase the sod webworm attack. Planting resistant grass cultivars could be a potential control measure.
CHEMICAL CONTROL:	If insecticides are used, the turf should be mowed and the clippings removed before treatment to enhance insecticide movement into the turf canopy. A thorough irrigation (1/2 to 3/4 inch) prior to application will move webworms closer to the surface. For best results, apply insecticides in the late afternoon or early evening when larvae are active. Following application, the treated area should be lightly irrigated (1/8 inch), but delay heavy watering for 24 to 48 hours unless irrigation is indicated on the insecticide label. Granule applications also should be lightly irrigated immediately after application to wash granules off grass blades and activate the insecticide. Insecticides for sod webworms include products with the following active ingredients: Azadirachtin, Bifenthrin, Carbaryl, Chlorantraniliprole, Clothiandin, Cyfluthrin, Deltamethrin, Dinotefuron, Halaofenozide, Lambda-cyhalothrin, Permethrin, Spinosad and Trichlorfon.
SOURCES OF INFORMATION	<p>Virginia Tech, Homes and Grounds Pest Management Guide https://resources.ext.vt.edu/contentdetail?contentid=2377&contentname=2021%20Pest%20Management%20Guide%20-%20Home%20Grounds%20and%20Animals</p> <p>University of Nebraska-Lincoln Department of Entomology https://entomology.unl.edu/turfent/documnts/swebwrms.shtml</p> <p>University of Georgia Cooperative Extension https://extension.uga.edu/publications/detail.html?number=C1156</p> <p>Michigan State University Extension https://www.canr.msu.edu/resources/sod_webworm_tips_for_your_lawn</p>
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