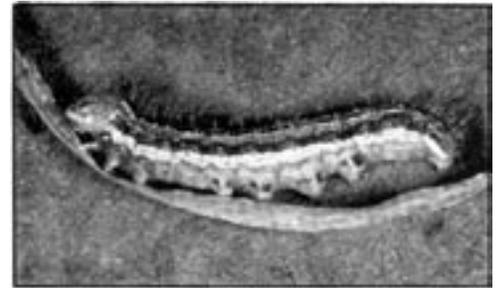


True Armyworm

Pseudaletia unipuncta

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| <i>Order:</i> | Lepidoptera (moths and butterflies) |
| <i>Family:</i> | Noctuidae (noctuid moths) |
| <i>Metamorphosis:</i> | Complete (egg-larva-pupa-adult) |
| <i>Mouthparts:</i> | Chewing in larvae and siphoning in adults |



Larva of the **TRUE ARMYWORM**, *Pseudaletia unipuncta*, see color print, Fig. 10, on publication B-1013.

The true armyworm feeds on corn, oats, barley, rye, and grass hay. In outbreak years, damage can be extensive. If a field is completely defoliated, larvae will move en masse to adjacent fields.

Body Form

Eggs: Eggs are small and oval (approximately 1/64 inch long) and yellow and white in color. They turn darker just prior to hatching. They are laid in masses usually on leaf folds.

Larvae: Larvae are green to brown in color with a dark stripe pattern running down the length of the abdomen on each side of the insect. A broader stripe runs along the length of the back and has a fine light broken line running down the center. Mature larvae are approximately 1¼ inches in length. There are three pairs of true legs near the head and five pairs of fleshy prolegs. One pair of prolegs is located near the anus, and the rest are along the length of the body.

Pupae: Pupa is dark brown. There are no protrusions extending from the pupal case. They are found within cracks and crevices of the soil.

Adults: Moths have a wingspan of approximately 1½ inches. When at rest, the wings are folded over the abdomen. The forewing is grayish brown with a distinctive white spot in the center.

Life History

Armyworms overwinter as half-grown larvae in grain. The larvae complete their development in spring and pupate as summer approaches. Emerging adults mate and eggs are laid on their host plants within three weeks. After hatching, larvae feed on the foliage of their host plant. There is one generation per year in Wyoming. Occasionally, populations increase to outbreak proportions. Outbreaks tend to occur following a cold, wet spring.

Plant Injury

Larvae defoliate their host plants. Young leaves will be completely eaten, and older leaves may be skeletonized leaving only the leaf veins uneaten. Often damage in a field may be spotty with field margins being the most prone to armyworm damage. During outbreaks, entire fields may be destroyed.

Management

Armyworm numbers are often insufficient to justify large-scale control efforts. Pheromone traps can be used to judge when fields should be checked for larva feeding. In outbreak years, insecticide use is warranted.

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