



Fall armyworm

Spodoptera frugiperda

Order Lepidoptera, Family Noctuidae; noctuid moths

Native pest

Pest information: Turf grasses, blade-feeding larvae; adults do not feed.

Description: Mature larvae reach 40 mm in length. Larvae range in color from olive green to light tan, to nearly black, typically with light stripes that run the length of the body. A yellow inverted Y-marking is on the front of the head.

Life history: Fall armyworm adults have annual flights from the South into Midwest states from June through August. Larvae feed at night and during the day they hide in thatch. Several generations may occur.

Overwintering: In Midwest states, moths have annual flights from the South. In other areas, they overwinter as larvae or pupae in soil.

Damage symptoms: Blades removed and holes are made in the sod; birds and skunks dig up the sod searching for larvae.

Monitoring: Thresholds are not well developed.

Cultural control: Maintain healthy grass by fertilizing in the spring and fall and watering during periods of drought.

Chemical control: Treat at first signs of damage. Use a soap flush to detect larvae. Do not use broad spectrum insecticides routinely, as they will do more harm than good and will kill the beneficial insects that live in the turf, which can cause pest outbreaks.

Biological control: Carabid ground beetles, staphylinid rove beetles, ants, spiders.

Plant mortality risk: High, if threshold is reached.

Biorational pesticides: azadirachtin, *Bacillus thuringiensis* var. *kurstaki*, *Beauveria bassiana*, halofenozide, nematodes (*Heterorhabditis bacteriophora*, *Steinernema carpocapsae*), spinosad

Conventional pesticides: acephate, bifenthrin, carbaryl, chlorpyrifos, cyfluthrin, deltamethrin, lambda-cyhalothrin, permethrin



Fall armyworm larva. (271)

Photo: Frank Suber, The University of Georgia