Black Cutworm

CROP BULLETIN

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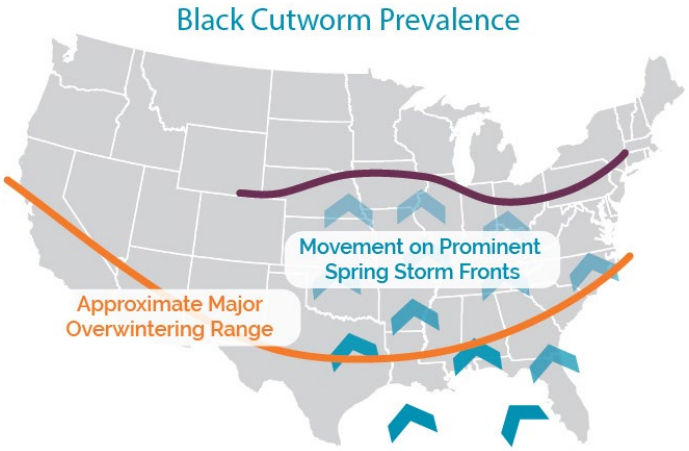
PEST FACTS AND IMPACT ON CROP

- Latin name: *Agrotis ipsilon*
- The black cutworm is the major cutworm of the Corn Belt – similar species are found worldwide
- Black cutworms eat many plants, including corn, cotton, tobacco, vegetables, weeds and turf grasses



PEST SYMPTOMS

- Small larvae chew holes in leaves
- Fourth stage or olderlarvae exceed the widthof a dime in length, andcan begin cutting V1 toV5 stage plants
- Drilling into V6-V8 stage plants can kill growing point
- Cutting mostly above ground in wet soil, mostly below ground in dry soil

Figure 1. Black cutworm damage to a corn plant.

Figure 2. Recovery after being cut above the growing point

PEST ID

Key characteristics

- Adult forewings with dagger-shaped marking and kidney-shaped spot
- Larvae are black/gray and grow to 1 5/8 inches

Figure 3. Black cutworm

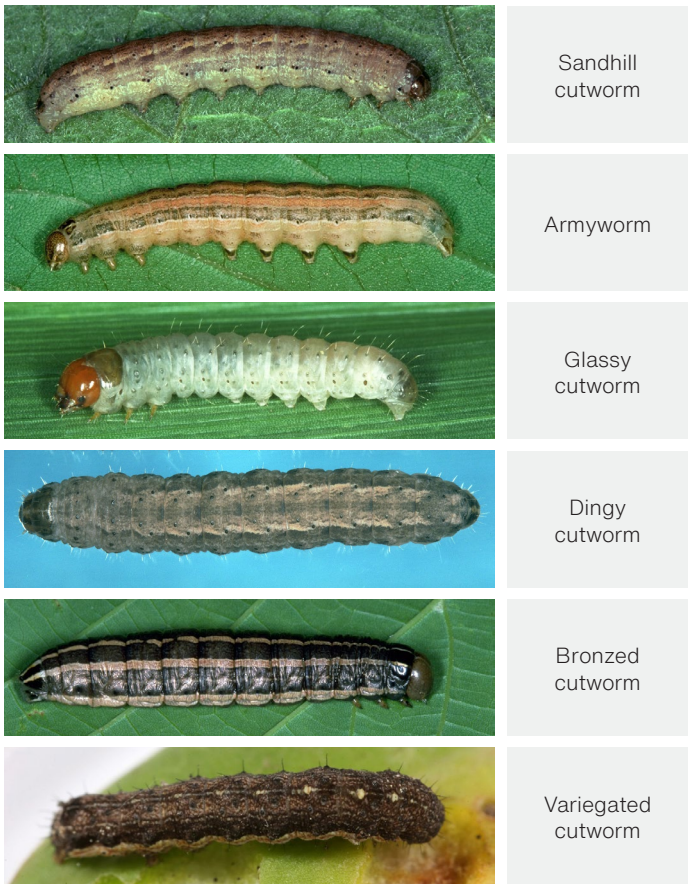
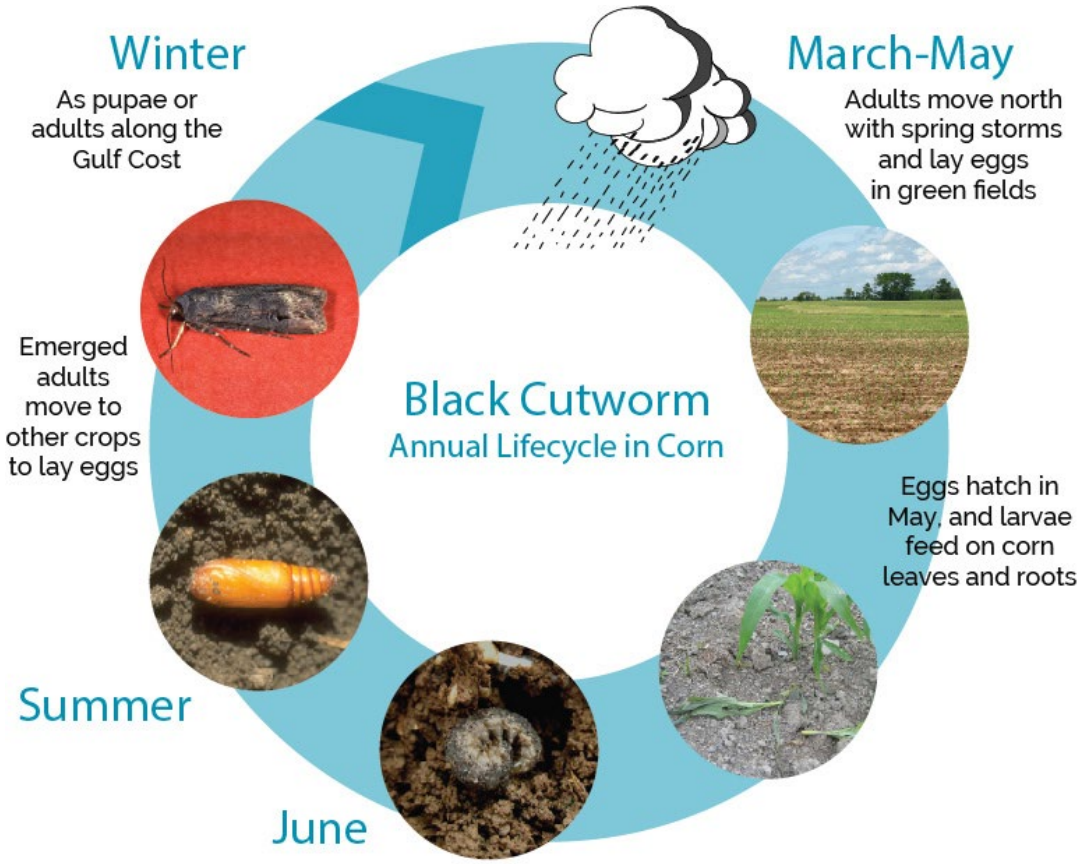


Figure 4. Related or similar-appearing species.



MANAGEMENT

- Favorable conditions for pest occurrence would be spring storms prior to tillage and planting delivering moths to the area
  - Monitor moth flight reports
  - Kill existing vegetation nine or more days prior to planting to reduce larval survival
  - Natural enemies are generally birds and other predators, though they're not usually effective
- IPM practices
  - Pheromone trapping is used to determine when the pest is present
  - Intensively scout fields that are at risk
  - Reduced tillage or other practices that leave a food source for the young larvae increase risk
  - Insecticide seed treatments at high rates may give some control, but lower rates are not as effective
  - Broadcast pesticide or bait application may be used as a rescue treatment

Figure 5. Black cutworm moth and wing close-up

MANAGEMENT WITH TRAITED PRODUCTS

- Corn products with the Herculex® I trait have very good protection against black cutworm.

Figure 6. A corn hybrid with the Herculex® I trait (right), compared to a susceptible hybrid (left) under black cutworm pressure. Orange stakes indicate cut plants.