



Vegetables

European Corn Borer

Pest Fact Sheet **17**

Introduction

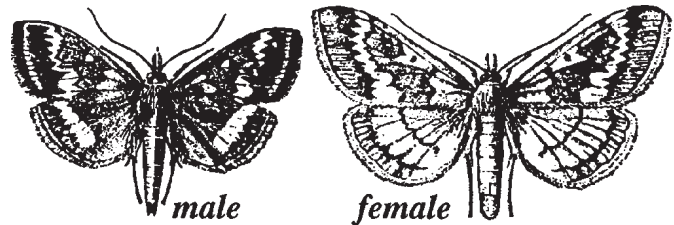
The European corn borer was introduced into the U.S. in 1917 and is one of our most destructive pests of corn. Broken tassels, collapsed stalks, feeding signs on leaves, and borings in stalks and ears are evidences of the presence of European corn borers. The European corn borer occurs in nearly all of the major corn-growing areas in the U.S.

Description of the European corn borer

The full-grown larva is 3/4-1" long and is flesh-colored with brown spots running the length of the body. The brown pupa is surrounded by a flimsy cocoon.

The adult moths have a wing span of about an inch. The wings are usually folded tent-like over the body. The males have mosaic markings in bronze, yellow and beige. The females are slightly larger than the males, have similar markings, and are paler in color.

The eggs can be found on the underside of corn leaves, along the midrib. They are laid in groups and look like fish scales. They change color as the egg develops, becoming dark when hatch is imminent.



Life cycle

There are two generations of European corn borer per year in southern New Hampshire, but only one generation further north. The pest overwinters as a full-grown larva in corn stubble, corn refuse and other plants. In the spring, the larvae pupate. Moths emerge from June to August, with the second generation often occurring in August.

Each female lays an average of 500-600 eggs. The eggs hatch into larvae in about a week, and the young larvae begin to feed on the leaves, making small holes and leaving a sawdust-like frass. The larvae migrate into the growing whorl of leaves where they eventually bore into the forming tassel. Infested tassels break when mature. As the larvae continue to grow, they eventually bore into stalks, usually at the internodes, and some find their way to the ears by boring through the side or the stem end of the ear. Heavily infested corn is easily lodged, making picking difficult. Some larvae move down the silk channel and attack the ear tips.

Mature larvae pupate in the cavities and some emerge as adult moths to start the second generation which occurs in August.

Control

Spunbonded row covers can exclude the moths and eliminate the need for spraying. If pesticides are used, the two critical periods are (1) late whorl stage, when the tassels just become visible down inside the whorl and (2) fresh silk stage. In the late whorl stage, pesticides are aimed into the whorl, not elsewhere. During the fresh silk stage, pesticides are aimed at the silks.

Consult your county Extension Educator (see county office telephone listing below) for specific pesticide recommendations.

Summary

Damaging stage	Larva
Parts of plant attacked	Leaves, stalk, tassel, ear
Overwintering stage	Larva
Number of generations per year	Two (Southern New Hampshire)
Time of year when damage is done	July, August
Number of applications used	1st brood: Up to 2 2nd brood: Up to 2

UNH Cooperative Extension County Office Telephone Numbers

Belknap (603) 527-5475	Carroll (603) 539-3331	Cheshire (603) 352-4550	Coos (603) 788-4961	Grafton (603) 787-6944
Hillsborough Goffstown (603) 641-6060	Merrimack (603) 796-2151	Rockingham Brentwood, NH 03833 (603) 679-5616	Strafford (603) 749-4445	Sullivan (603) 863-9200

Stop! It is always the pesticide applicator's responsibility, by law, to read and follow all current label directions for the specific pesticide being used. If unsure of registration status of a particular pesticide product, contact the NH Division of Pesticide Control at (603) 271-3550. Store pesticides in their original containers in a locked cabinet or shed away from food. Dispose of unused pesticides or empty containers safely, according to NH regulations. If you suspect pesticide poisoning, call the New Hampshire Poison Control Center at 1-800-562-8236.



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