



Turf

Sod Webworm

Pest **48**
Fact
Sheet

Introduction

Sod webworms are the caterpillar stage of small moths. The adult moths are about one inch long, tan-colored, and are often seen flying about the lawn in jerky, short flight. The caterpillar is three-fourths of an inch long when full grown, brown or grey and spotted. The larvae construct silk-lined tunnels in the soil or thatch and come out to feed on grass at night.

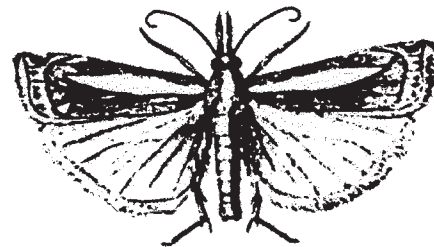
The damage shows up first as small, irregular brown patches. Flocks of birds seen on the turf are a good indication of the presence of sod webworm. Birds make probing holes into the turf as they search for the caterpillars. Birds can cause significant damage.

Life Cycle & Damage

Spring: When the weather warms, the overwintering caterpillars resume feeding on the grass. Damage is first observed in late June or July.

Summer: Adults or moths appear in July, mate and lay eggs. The larvae of these moths will cause damage in August.

Fall: Adults again appear in September, mate and lay eggs. The larvae of these eggs will overwinter in the soil.



**Sod Webworm Adult,
Crambus praefectellus (enlarged)**

Control

To sample for presence of sod webworms, look carefully at the damaged area for silken tunnels. Or, place one tablespoon of liquid dishwashing detergent or one-quarter cup of powdered detergent in a gallon of water. Apply this liquid to one square yard of turf. The soap will irritate any webworms present and force them to the surface. Consult your county Extension Educator (see county office telephone listing on reverse side) for specific pesticide recommendations.

Summary

Damaging stage	Caterpillars, larvae
Overwintering stage	Larvae
Number of generations per year	2
Time of year damage is done	1st generation: Late June or July 2nd generation: August
Major symptoms	Small irregular brown patches, flocks of birds on the turf

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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