



# PLANT DISEASE AND INSECT ADVISORY

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## Army Cutworms in Wheat Tom Royer



Army cutworm caterpillars have been found infesting wheat, and in some cases, lawns in western Oklahoma. Miles Karner reported army cutworm "battalions" moving into yards from Elk City to Altus. I have received reports of them crawling up the side of houses in the Cherokee area as well. This is an unusual situation brought on by the poor wheat stands and dry conditions we have experienced and probably represents the tail end of "the year of the moth" that I have decided to name the year 2001.

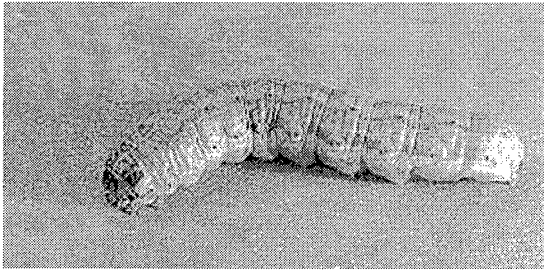
If the recent precipitation that we have received stimulates wheat growth, it could help the wheat keep ahead of any cutworm injury caused by densities in the 1-3 worms per square foot range. If the wheat is small and under some moisture stress, watch the field closely for signs of injury and scout the field for army cutworm. The mild weather that we have experienced has accelerated their development somewhat, so damage may occur earlier than normal. Cold weather is not a factor in survival of army cutworm; they thrive in cold weather.

If field counts turn up 4 or more per square foot (2-3 per linear foot), treatments should be considered, based upon the growing conditions and yield potential of the crop. Currently, Warrior is labeled at a rate of 1.92-3.2 fluid oz per acre for wheat. There is a 30-day harvest restriction, and no more than 0.06 lb. active ingredient per acre can be applied in a single growing season. Lorsban is also labeled at a rate of 1 pint per acre and has a 14-day grazing and 28-day harvest waiting period.

You may see that methyl parathion and parathion are both registered for army cutworm control in wheat, even though they are not listed in our Agents Handbook. A study conducted in Kansas by Bauernfiend and Wilde looked at army cutworm control at two locations and found that Karate and Lorsban were much more effective than methyl parathion for army cutworm control. Efficacy tests conducted in South Dakota demonstrated that both Lorsban and Warrior are effective.

## Army Cutworms in Lawns

Tom Royer



Army cutworms are also being reported in lawns, and apparently have been invading houses. There is little information on type and extent of injury that they may cause to bermuda lawns. Army cutworms feed on a wide variety of plants, including dandelion, lambs quarters, mustards, and other winter annual weeds as well as barley, bluegrass, brome grass, buffalograss, timothy and other grasses. It is a bit unclear as to whether they can cause severe damage to dormant bermudagrass. They typically feed on green leaves, and although they “sleep” under the soil surface, they prefer to feed above ground. When food becomes scarce, “they will follow the plants on which they are feeding down into the soil,” according to Burton, Starks and Peters. The bottom line is that they will likely get rid of any green winter annual weeds in your lawn, and may get to some growing points of the bermuda lawn that are near the soil surface

Several insecticides are registered for use as perimeter sprays or lawn treatments for army cutworm infestations. Some products such as Bayer’s Advanced Lawn and Garden Multi-Insect Killer or Ortho’s Bug-B-Gone products can be readily obtained and used to control cutworms in lawns or to prevent them from entering households. Any product that contains chlorpyrifos, the active ingredient in Dursban, may be labeled for control of cutworms. Remember, Dursban products can no longer be sold, but any existing product can be used according to label instructions. Once army cutworms have successfully invaded the indoor premises, a strong vacuum cleaner may be the best weapon to defeat them. The good news is that once army cutworm caterpillars become adult moths, they migrate northward and spend their summer in the Rocky Mountains, so we won’t have a repeat performance until next winter.

## Grape Management Course 2002: New emphasis on IPM

Sharon von Broembsen and Phil Mulder

The OCES Grape Management Course will be offered again in 2002. It begins Feb. 21, 2002 and meets afternoons to early evenings once a month through October. The course takes place at the Oklahoma Fruit Research Station at Perkins, OK. Registration will be limited to the first 50 applicants but there are still a few more spaces left in the course as of Feb. 5, 2002. The course covers all phases of grape production from land preparation to harvesting, but this year it will feature training and support materials for implementing an integrated pest management (IPM) program. The IPM scouting materials, which include a hand lens, insect monitoring traps, color plates for insect and disease identification, and free insect identification and disease diagnosis, are made possible because of a grant from the IPM Mini-Grant Program of the Oklahoma Cooperative Extension at OSU. The cost of the basic course to the public is \$150 and covers extensive educational materials, soil and plant tests, and much



more. County educators and other OSU personnel can enroll at no cost but will need to register with Dean McCraw in the Department of Horticulture and Landscape Architecture at [dmcraw@okstate.edu](mailto:dmcraw@okstate.edu) or (405) 744-5409.

For more information, check out the complete course program and details at [http://www.okstate.edu/OSU\\_Ag/asnr/hortla/ftpncs/grape\\_mgmt\\_course.htm](http://www.okstate.edu/OSU_Ag/asnr/hortla/ftpncs/grape_mgmt_course.htm) or contact Dr. McCraw.

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