Protecting okra seeds from cotton stainer

Recognize the problem
Adult cotton stainers have brown and black backs with two black spots. They have red and white stripes on the body underneath. Young cotton stainers have red and white stripes all over the body. These insects may feed for several days on okra plants, leaving black spots on the dry pods.

Background
This insect pierces a hole and sucks nutrients from the pod. This weakens the plant and reduces the yield of the crop. The insect’s mouth is not sharp enough to pierce a hole in the okra if there is a barrier between the insect and the pod.

Management
Tie a clear (see-through) plastic bag over the okra pods. This stops the cotton stainers from feeding on the pods. This means the pods and seeds are protected, the quality of the pods is increased and the seeds are able to grow when planted.

Use a see-through bag that is normally used to ice water. Poke very tiny holes in the "water plastic", as it is commonly called, so that air can move in and out of the plastic to reduce moisture.

Cover the pods with the bag and tie the open end of the plastic at the base of the pod with a piece of thread.

This method can also be used on cotton bolls which are attacked by the same insect.

Scientific name(s) > *Dysdercus sp.*

The recommendations in this factsheet are relevant to: Ghana, Sierra Leone

Authors: Johnny E Norman
Department of Crop Protection, Njala University
tel: +232 78 283709 email: inanorman@yahoo.com

Edited by Plantwise.

Plantwise is a global initiative led by CABI
©CAB International. Published under a CC-BY-SA 4.0 licence.