

Cultural control of Cucurbit Armyworm

Recognize the problem

Armyworm is a leaf feeder of cucurbits and can cause large economic losses to farmers, as the insect eats very quickly.

The moth lays eggs in clusters under the leaf. The larvae is generally green with a black ring around the head. They are the size of a small finger when fully grown. When they appear on the crop, they feed in large numbers on the leaves, leaving behind only the veins.

Background

The armyworm larvae do not only feed on cucurbits. They also live on other crops and weeds in the field. Therefore, the armyworm can be controlled by removing weeds and other host plants like jantar, tobacco, okra, and berseem. It is also possible to reduce the number of armyworms by destroying the egg masses that are found on the underside of leaves.

Cultural control aims to reduce the number of pests in the field by removing the affected plant parts and destroying them.

Cultural control is easy to apply and is more environmentally friendly than most measures that involve chemicals.

Management

- To reduce the number of armyworms eggs and grubs in the field, visit the field twice a week and complete the following:
 - Remove the leaves that have egg masses on their underside. Put them all in a paper bag and burn them outside the field.
 - Remove as many visible caterpillars as possible. Put them all in a paper bag and burn them outside the field.
- Remove alternate host plants like jantar, tobacco, okra, and berseem from the field and burn them

Cucurbit armyworm caterpillar.
(Photo by Russ Ottens, University of Georgia, Bugwood)



Egg mass on the underside of a leaf.
(Photo by Ronald Smith, Auburn University, Bugwood)



Scientific name(s) > *Spodoptera exigua*

The recommendations in this factsheet are relevant to: Pakistan



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