

Fall armyworm photo guide – identification



Adult females lay 100-200 eggs on the lower leaves. They change from green to light brown before hatching.



Eggs are covered in protective scales rubbed off from the moths abdomen.



After hatching, the young caterpillars begin feeding on the leaves.



As they grow, caterpillars change from light green to brown.



Fall armyworms have four dark spots forming a square on the second-to-last body segment.



Fall armyworms have a dark head with a pale, up-side-down Y-shape on the front.



They are at their most damaging when they are 3-4 cm long.



The pupa is shiny brown and usually found 2-8 cm into the soil.



Adult moths (top: female, bottom: male). The females are slightly bigger than the males.

Fall armyworm photo guide – maize damage



Feeding by young caterpillars results in semi-transparent patches on the leaves called windows.



Young caterpillars can spin silken threads which catch the wind and transport the caterpillars to a new plant.



Feeding through the whorl can cause a line of identical "shot" holes, when the leaf unfurls.



As they develop, Fall armyworm move permanently into the whorl. This means that it is difficult to detect early infestations.



Feeding can cause the whorl and upper leaves to be a mass of holes, ragged edges, and caterpillar poo (called "frass").



The caterpillars usually burrow into the side of the cob.



Fall armyworm infestation causes stunting and destruction of developing tassels and kernels, which reduces grain quality and yield.



When the caterpillars burrow into the side of the cob, damage to grains can lead to rot.



Holding a maize plant damaged by Fall armyworm.