WESTERN YELLOWSTRIPED ARMYWORM (WYA)

Spodoptera praefica

Description:

Adults:

Adults have a wingspan of 1.4-1.6 in (35-40 mm). Mostly brown moths, with buff-colored, brown, and dark brown markings on front wings and silvery-gray hind wings.

Eggs:

Eggs are laid in clusters on the upper side of leaves and covered with a gray, cottony material.

Larvae:

Larvae are almost black, with two distinct yellow stripes on each side of the body with a large black spot above the first abdominal spiracle and an inverted Y marking on the head.

Pupae:

Pupae are reddish brown in color and found in the soil.

Hosts:

Wide range of hosts including vegetables (asparagus, potatoes, beans, peas, beets, carrots, chives, and squash), fruit (tomatoes, berries, and grapes), forage (alfalfa, corn, canola, buckwheat, barley, and peas), ornamentals, and weeds.

Damage:

- Larvae feed on foliage, skeletonizing or chewing large holes in leaves and can cause complete defoliation.
- Feed on the surface of fruit such as tomatoes, causing single or closely grouped circular or irregular holes on the surface.

Phenology:

- Number of generations depends on climate, with up to 5 generations per year in warmer, dry climates of California and up to 3 generations per year in northern regions such as the Pacific Northwest.
- Larvae of the last generation overwinters as pupae in the soil.

Lure Type and Maintenance:

- PHEROCON® WYA controlled release septa lure.
- Replace PHEROCON® WYA lures every 4 weeks.

Lure Storage:

- Store in unopened factory sealed packages in a cool place (< 74° F or 24° C maximum).
- Refrigerate or freeze unopened packages to carry over for annual storage.

Trap Design:

- PHEROCON® 1C, PHEROCON® Bucket trap, or PHEROCON® VI white Delta.

Left: Adult WYA moth (source: iNaturalist). Center: Cluster of WYA eggs and Right: WYA larva (source: US Pest Fact Sheet).

Left: Alfalfa infested with WYA larvae (source: UC ANR). Right: Feeding damage to tomatoes (Purdue Extension).

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WESTERN YELLOWSTRIPED ARMYWORM (WYA), *Spodoptera praefica*

Placement Time:

- Place traps in field in early spring before adults emerge.

Placement Pattern:

- Place traps on edges of field or inside field 16-24 rows from edge.
- Traps should be suspended on a stake so bottom of trap is just above canopy.
- Place traps at least 50-100 ft (15-30 m) apart.

Trap Density:

- Minimum of 2 traps per field.
- One trap per 20 acres (8 hectares).

Trap Maintenance:

- Check traps at least weekly, but preferably twice a week.
- Replace trap liners every 4 weeks or when fouled with dust or insect debris.

Recommendations:

- Pheromone traps will help indicate if moths are present and when to expect caterpillars in fields.
- Sweep net samples should be taken 2-3 times per week to monitor for small caterpillars in late spring through summer.
- Use visual scouting for larger caterpillars on plants or soil surface; larvae tend to drop off plants and onto soil when disturbed. Inspect larvae for parasitoid eggs.
- Cultural control, chemical control, and biological control methods should all be considered for optimal integrated pest management for WYA.

Source: Recommendations and certain other sections were sourced from UC Pest Management Guidelines for Western Yellowstriped Armyworm, WSU Western Yellowstriped Armyworm information, and PNW Handbooks.

Note, always:

- Use only one lure per trap.
- Count and record captures as recommended.
- Change trap as needed.
- Discard lures in trash far from the area of use and remove trash afterwards.
- Follow recommendations.
- Contact local extension authorities and consultants for regional advice.

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