



Corn rootworm

Overview

Northern and western corn rootworms (*Diabrotica*) are native to North America. Both species cause damage in both their larval and adult stages. Rootworm larvae can damage corn root systems, while adult beetles can feed on silks, causing poor pollination.

What you should know

- Rootworm larvae begin to hatch from overwintering eggs in late spring. They primarily feed on corn roots, but larger larvae can tunnel into the plant crown.
- Destruction of root tissue can impact water and nutrient uptake. Severe root pruning can kill small plants. Larger plants may produce new root growth faster than larvae can prune the roots, but in some cases, root pruning may be severe enough to cause plant lodging and reduce yields.
- Adult corn rootworms emerge in July and August. They feed on corn silks, sometimes clipping them. Poor pollination from silk clipping is more likely to occur when plants are under drought stress.

Action steps

1. **Identification:** Dig around corn roots and look for larvae in the soil and on roots. Other signs include window paning and scarring on the roots. Look for adult beetles near silks (see photo).
2. **Rotate crops:** Rootworms cannot successfully complete their larval development on crops other than corn. Crop rotation has been an effective management strategy, except where an extended diapause trait exists, allowing eggs to remain dormant in the soil through two winters before hatching in the second growing season.
3. **Sample regularly:** Assess roots and stalks to determine the extent of your rootworm issue.
4. **Consider insecticides:** A prophylactic insecticide application may be necessary in severe cases.
5. **Select appropriate hybrids:** Choose hybrids with tolerance to corn rootworm or with traited rootworm protection.

For more information, contact:



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Adult rootworm beetles can eat corn leaves and silks, but damage begins at the roots during rootworm's larval stage.



30-Second Summary

- Corn rootworms cause damage in both their larval and adult stages.
- Corn rootworms can weaken root structures.
- The plant's ability to absorb moisture and nutrients is compromised, leading to potential yield reduction.
- Adult rootworm beetles can damage corn silks, reducing pollination.

NOTES:
