



# Fall Armyworm

## Overview

Fall armyworm causes leaf damage and injury to corn ears. While fall armyworms can damage plants in nearly any stage of development, they prefer later plantings that have not yet silked. Early detection and proper timing of insecticide application is critical for controlling the pests.

## What you should know

- Fall armyworm can be difficult to control. Late-planted fields and late-maturing hybrids are more likely to become infested.
- Early symptoms include small holes and feeding on the leaves emerging from the whorl. Plants often recover from whorl damage without any reduction in yield.
- Fall armyworm larvae vary in color from tan to black with three yellow stripes down the back. They resemble other corn borers, but fall armyworm has a white inverted Y on its head.
- Fall armyworm can only be effectively controlled while larvae are small. Larger larvae consume large amounts of leaf tissue. Larvae will move to ears as plants begin to tassel and young ears develop. Ears may become partly or totally destroyed.

## Action steps

1. **Scout fields:** Begin scouting mid-June for fall armyworm activity. Problems usually occur in fields planted after June 1 or those with a history of the pests. Fall armyworms prefer the whorl stage of corn, so scouting late-planted fields is a priority. Continue to monitor for fall armyworm until silks begin to dry.
2. **Treat while the larvae are small:** Apply insecticide treatments before larvae burrow deep into the whorl or enter the ears.
3. **Choose the right hybrid:** Select a hybrid that performs well in your area and has traited protection against fall armyworm. Remember that *Bt* varieties require non-*Bt* refuges. Refer to the product label for specific requirements.

<https://entomology.ca.uky.edu/ef110>

For more information, contact:



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*The fall armyworm causes leaf damage and injury to corn ears.*



## 30-Second Summary

- Fall armyworm is actually a summer pest. Begin scouting fields in mid-June.
- The larvae can damage both corn leaves and ears.
- Late-planted corn is more susceptible to fall armyworm.
- Resistant *Bt* hybrids and good weed control practices can help control fall armyworm infestation.

## NOTES:

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