

Redbacked Cutworm

Euxoa ochrogaster
(Guenée)



Redbacked cutworm larvae
John Gavloski, Manitoba Agriculture

OTHER COMMON NAME
None available

FRENCH COMMON NAME
Ver-gris à dos rouge

IDENTIFICATION

ADULTS: Forewings variable in colour, ranging from light yellow-brown, orange-brown, or red-brown with a pale brownish-yellow kidney-shaped spot pale. Tips of forewings for all colour-forms have a dark gray band. Wingspan of about 40 mm.

MATURE LARVAE: Hairless; about 38 mm in length. Broad reddish-brown stripe extending down the back with a dark center line bordered by a dark band on each side.

DISTRIBUTION

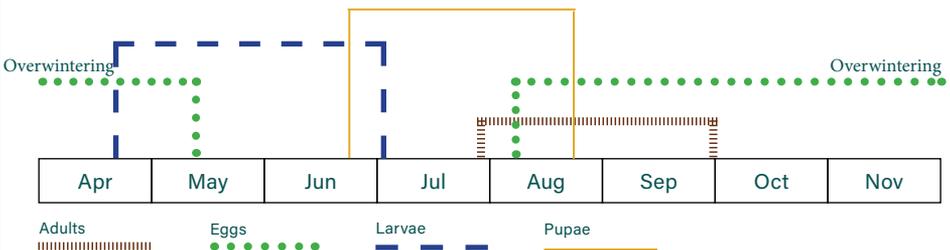
Native to North America; globally present in most of the northern hemisphere in dry open habitats.

LIFE CYCLE

Overwinters as eggs in the top 1 cm of soil. Larvae pupate in earthen cells. One generation per year.

HOSTS

Cereals, flax, canola, corn, mustard, sunflower, sugar beet, forage legumes, vegetables and many other crops.



FEEDING DAMAGE

ABOVE-GROUND CUTWORM: Newly-hatched larvae feed on the surface of newly-emerging shoots and furled leaves of young plants causing small holes. Plants damaged in this manner may or may not recover. Older larvae move along rows cutting off leaves and sever plants just below the soil surface. They occasionally pull and eat severed plants underground.



Redbacked cutworm adult
John Gavloski, Manitoba Agriculture

MONITORING/CONTROL

Monitor germinating cereal crops for sections within rows of dead or dying plants; adjacent rows with this damage may be visible as thinned or bare areas. Examine the top 5-7 cm of soil in a 30 cm x 30 cm (0.1 m²) area for larvae at a minimum of 10 sites along the edges of an affected area. Multiply average by 10 to calculate number of larvae per square meter.

Insecticide treatments may be warranted if economic thresholds are exceeded, but take steps to minimize effects on natural enemies; see *General Control Options* (p. 26).

Apply insecticides to infested areas in late evening when larvae begin feeding. Larvae that do not contact residues on the soil surface will be exposed when they feed on treated leaves. Infested fields should be sprayed before reseeding.

ECONOMIC THRESHOLDS

CEREALS: 5-6 larvae/m².

GRAIN CORN: 5-6 larvae/m².

FLAX: 4-5 larvae/m².

CANOLA: 4-5 larvae/m².

PEA: 2-3 larvae/m².

DRY BEANS AND SOY BEANS: 1 small (< 2.5 cm long) larva per meter of row, or 20% of plants cut.

NOTES

May co-occur with pale western cutworm (p. 56), black cutworm (p. 40) and other species.

Uncultivated fields with broadleaf perennial and winter annual weeds attract egg-laying females. Therefore, keep uncultivated fields weed-free from late July to the end of September. If volunteer cereals show signs of feeding damage in the spring, cultivate the soil and keep it black for 10 days before seeding to starve young larvae (Salt and Seamans 1945).



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Cutworm Pests of Crops on the Canadian Prairies

IDENTIFICATION AND MANAGEMENT FIELD GUIDE

Canada 

Cutworm Pests of Crops on the Canadian Prairie: Identification and Management Field Guide

Cover photo: Armyworm cutworm larva and damage,
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