

Identifying armyworm larvae

Armyworm species are members of the noctuid family and have many similarities during their lifestages. In general:

- Moths are grey or brown with a 35-40 mm wingspan; wing patterns can vary from mild to very mottled/patterned.
- Eggs are laid in masses. *Spodoptera* spp. cover the mass with a layer of scales, creating a furry appearance.
- Newly hatched caterpillars usually have a pale or translucent body and dark head, and develop more distinctive colours/patterns as they grow.
- Older larvae (30-40 mm long) provide the best chance of visual identification. Even then, individuals can vary widely.

Caterpillars with a wide host range (narrow and broadleaf)




Armyworms

<p>Dayfeeding armyworm <i>Spodoptera exempta</i></p>  <p>Also known as African armyworm; body is darker at high population densities.</p>	<p>Lesser armyworm <i>Spodoptera exigua</i></p>  <p>Also known as beet armyworm; often yellow or pinkish underneath.</p>	<p>Fall armyworm <i>Spodoptera frugiperda</i></p>  <p>Variable colours; short hairs; pale 'Y' marking on head; raised dots in a trapeze and square patterns on back.</p>	<p>Cluster caterpillar <i>Spodoptera litura</i></p>  <p>Variable colours; yellow/orange lines with dark crescent-shapes along the back and a row of dark dots along each side.</p>
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Similar-looking caterpillars

<p>Helicoverpa <i>H. armigera</i> and <i>H. punctigera</i> (30-35 mm)</p>  <p>Variable colours; hairs along back and sides.</p>	<p>Cutworms <i>Agrotis</i> spp. (50 mm)</p>  <p>Dark larvae; mostly ground-dwelling.</p>	<p>Loopers multiple species (30-40 mm)</p>  <p>Variable colours; distinctive 'looping' movement.</p>
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Medium-sized larvae

 <p>Helicoverpa</p>	 <p>Fall armyworm</p>	 <p>Cluster caterpillar</p>
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Armyworms that occur in cereals and grasses

Common and Northern armyworm *Mythimna convecta* and *M. separata*

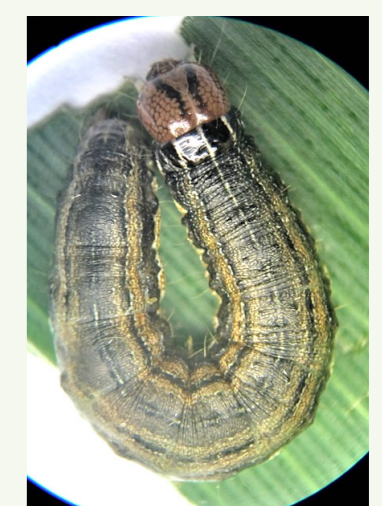


Sugarcane armyworm *Leucania stenographa*



Only found in sugarcane and pastures.

False armyworm *Leucania loreyi*



Head marking is dark; lacks the obvious raised dots of fall armyworm.

Lawn armyworm *Spodoptera mauritia*



Similar crescent markings to cluster caterpillar but without the rows of dark circles along the sides.