

Problem: Sod Webworm - *Parapediasia teterrilla* and *Surattha indentella*



Sod Webworm Larva



Sod Webworm Adults

Hosts: Kentucky bluegrass, buffalograss, bermudagrass and bentgrass

Description: The sod webworm moth is small (1/2 inch long) and whitish-gray. They clasp or roll their wings close to their bodies when resting and have mouthparts projecting forward from the head like a snout. The moths are usually noticed when flushed out by people walking. They fly in a jerky zig zag manner and quickly return to the grass to hide. Around dusk, they may be seen flying a few feet above the grass and dropping their eggs. In a few days, these eggs and others laid on the lower parts of the grass stems hatch into small caterpillars. It is the caterpillar that damages the grass.

The caterpillars generally have dark heads and rows of light-brown spots arranged in rings around the greenish-gray bodies. They live near the soil surface in silken shelters covered with bits of grass. The larvae clip off grass blades close to the round and pull them back into their silken 'runways'. After several weeks of feeding they change into pupae and soon emerge as moths. There are two generations per season in Kansas.

Recommendations: Sod webworm can damage an area of lawn about the size of a softball. If the infestation is severe, the spots may coalesce into much larger areas. Wait 7 to 14 days after seeing peak moth flights and look for damage to the turf. Realize that an abundance of moths does not automatically mean damage. Also look for large numbers of birds, particularly starlings, pecking holes in the lawn looking for caterpillars.

Control measures should be considered when you find 2 to 4 webworms per square foot of sod. Irrigate (1/2 to 3/4 inch) to bring the webworms close to the surface and treat in late afternoon or early evening when the insects are most active. Apply another 1/8 inch of water to activate the insecticide. Suggested insecticides include bifenthrin (Talstar, Hi-Yield Bug Blaster II, Hi-Yield Bug Blaster Bifenthrin and Ortho Bug B Gon Lawn Insect Killer) and cyhalothrin (Scimitar, Spectracide Triazicide).

References:

1. [Sod Webworms](#), Turfgrass Entomology, University of Nebraska-Lincoln
2. Turfgrass Insects of the United States and Canada, Cornell University Press, pg. 70 - 90

Last Update: 10/18/2023

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