

Sod Webworms

TREE DOCTOR TIPS | LAWN

Sod Webworms

(Parapediasia teterrella, Pediasia trisecta and other species)

DESCRIPTION:

Sod webworms are grayish-green caterpillars with dark brown heads and brown spots along the length of their bodies. The caterpillars live in silken tunnels at the base of grass blades, feeding on the grass blades at night and hiding in their tunnels during the day. Some species do not construct silken tunnels, but also live in the thatch layer.

HOSTS:

Common grasses subject to sod webworm infestation include:

- Kentucky bluegrass
- Perennial ryegrass
- Fine fescue
- Bentgrass

Warm-season grasses such as bermudagrass and zoysiagrass are rarely affected, however a tropical sod webworm may invade St. Augustinegrass.

BIOLOGY AND SYMPTOMS:

Small, brown areas appearing as scalped turf enlarge as sod webworms continue to feed. An easy indicator is the presence of small moths flying just above the grass in the early evening hours or that flush out during mowing. Small green pellets (frass) may also be seen at the base of grass blades. Spring and summer are the common feeding seasons.

MANAGEMENT:

Early detection is key by looking for close areas that appear scalped and caterpillars in silken tunnels. Insecticide treatments and fertilization are the most effective treatments. Schedule a consultation with your local landscape professional to learn more about the best practices to rid your lawn of sod webworms.



A



B



C

FIGURE A. ADVANCED TURF DAMAGE; NOTE CHEWED GRASS BLADES, GREEN FECAL PELLETS AND THE LARVA - UPPER CENTER

FIGURE B. ADULT MOTHS FLYING JUST ABOVE THE GRASS IN THE EARLY EVENING IS A SIGN OF SOD WEBWORMS

FIGURE C. EARLY DAMAGE, SOD WEBWORMS

*The scientists at **The Davey Institute** laboratory and research facility support our arborists and technicians in diagnosing and prescribing based on the latest arboricultural science. For specific treatment and application details, your arborist may consult *The Davey Institute's Plant Health Care Book*.*

