

Fall Armyworm Field Guide

How to identify and manage Fall Armyworm

What to look for



Source: SANBI

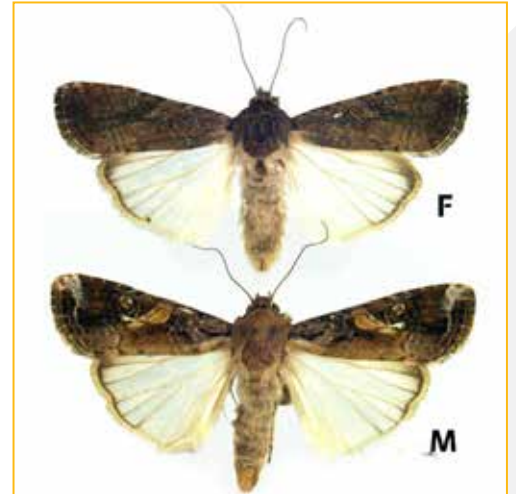
Larvae – Have a dark head with an upside down, pale, Y-shaped marking, and four dark spots aligned in a square on the second-to-last body segment.



Source: DPIRD WA

Eggs – Typically laid in clusters of 100 to 300 on the underside of leaves.

FAW egg masses are covered in a layer of white or greyish hairs, which can make them look furry or mouldy.



Source: Robert Bauerfeind

Moths – Have brown-grey forewings and cream-coloured hind wings. Adult moths are nocturnal and are most active during late summer and early autumn



Damage – first sign of FAW infestation is usually pin hole feeding marks by new larvae (below left). As larvae grow feeding will result in large, jagged holes right across the leaf (below middle). Late-instar larvae may burrow into ears of corn and feed directly on kernels (right).

What should I do if I see Fall Armyworm?

If you believe you have seen a Fall Armyworm – either an adult (moths), larvae, or egg masses, take a photo and call Biosecurity New Zealand Exotic Pest and Disease Hotline on **0800 80 99 66** or report online at report.mpi.govt.nz/pest

Similar species

Particularly in the larval stage, FAW can often be mistaken for similar, related species. The species which are most likely to be mistaken for FAW, all of which are found in the North Island, are cosmopolitan armyworm (*Mythimna separata*), tropical armyworm (*Spodoptera litura*), and corn earworm (*Helicoverpa armigera*). The following may be useful for differentiating these four species.



Source: Lucidcentral



Source: PHEL

Cosmopolitan armyworm

– larvae are pale grey in colour, with three white stripes that run along the length of the body. Moths have dull yellow-brown forewings and grey hind wings.

Tropical armyworm – Larvae have prominent halfmoon markings that run in two lines along the back, along with two yellow bands running the length of the body on each side. Moths have dark forewings with white markings, and white hindwings.



Source: Stringfixer



Source: Bugwood.org



Source: Stringfixer



Source: Bugwood.org

Corn earworm – Larvae can vary in colour. The body surface is rough with small spikes that are visible under a hand lens, with circular black breathing holes on the sides. Moths have forewings that are either yellow-orange or green-grey; hindwings are pale with a narrow dark band on the external edge.