



Sod webworms

Crambus species and *Parapediasia* species
Order Lepidoptera, Family Pyralidae; snout moths
Native pests

Pest information: Turf grasses, blade feeding larvae; adults do not feed.

Description: The adults of sod webworms are frequently called lawn moths. They are light-colored moths, which make short, erratic, darting flights above the turf and are attracted to lights at night. When resting they fold their wings back closely against their bodies, which gives them a very narrow appearance. Also, their heads appear to have a long snout. The moths deposits their eggs in the lawn. The older larvae are a dirty white to light brown with darker spots and are about 19 mm long with a black head.

Life history: The larvae feed at night on grass blades. During the day the larvae hide in silk-lined tunnels or burrows at or slightly into the soil surface. Some species damage plant crowns or roots as well as blades. Two generations or more can occur.

Overwintering: Pupae in soil.

Damage symptoms: Heavy infestations of the second generation may seriously damage large areas of turf. Although webworm adults are commonly seen, larval damage is uncommon in home lawns, but more common in athletic fields. Look for dew sparkling on the webs in the early morning or at dusk. Use the flotation method to force the caterpillars to the surface, where they can be counted. In the flotation method, a soapy solution is poured inside a topless and bottomless can. The soapy solution is made by adding one ounce of mild dishwashing detergent to one gallon of water.

Monitoring: It is best to scout for sod webworms in June, July, August, and September since sod webworms have multiple generations per year. Tolerance is around 12 larvae/sq. ft.

Cultural control: Maintain healthy grass by fertilizing in the spring and fall and watering during periods of drought.

Chemical control: Treat when damage from larvae is noticed. Adult activity does not indicate damage from larvae will happen. Most damage occurs in spring and early summer though the adults are common in the fall. The cranberry girdler sod webworm should be treated in late August through September. Use a soap flush to detect larvae. Do not use broad spectrum insecticides routinely, as they will do more harm than good and will kill the beneficial insects that live in the turf, which can cause pest outbreaks.

Biological control: Carabid ground beetles, staphylinid rove beetles, ants, spiders.

Plant Mortality Risk: Medium

Biorational pesticides: azadirachtin, *Bacillus thuringiensis* var. *kurstaki*, halofenozide, *Beauveria bassiana*, nema-



Sod webworm adult. (287)
Photo: Mark Ascerno



Sod webworm larva. (W112)
Photo: Whitney Cranshaw



Sod webworm larva. (288)
Photo: Mark Ascerno

todes (*Heterorhabditis bacteriophora*, *Steinernema carpocapsae*), spinosad

Conventional pesticides: acephate, beta-cyfluthrin, bifenthrin, carbaryl, chlorpyrifos, cyfluthrin, deltamethrin, lambda-cyhalothrin, permethrin, trichlorfon