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# Armyworms

## characteristics and control in small grains

William M. Hantsbarger<sup>1/</sup>

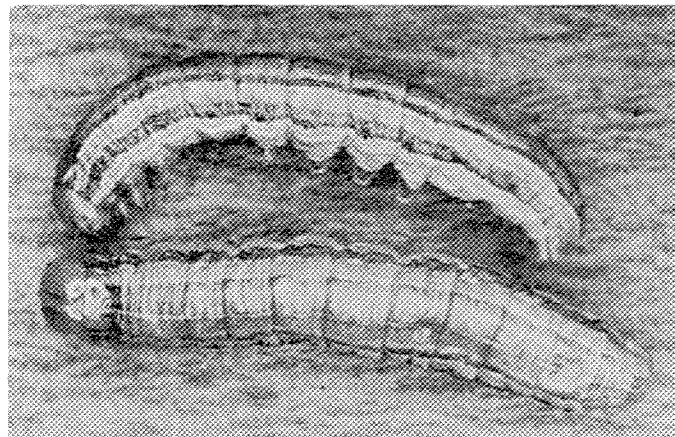
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### Quick Facts

Armyworms are infrequently found in Colorado in large enough numbers to cause extensive small grain damage. Adult moths migrate into Colorado from the south during late spring or early summer.

Eggs are laid on cereal grain leaves. Eggs hatch into small green cutworms. The cutworms do not appear until early summer.

When food is gone in an area, worms move in large armies to another food source.



Armyworm larvae.

True armyworms, *Pseudaletia unipuncta*, are found in Colorado each year in small numbers. Outbreaks, however, do occur periodically. In such years extensive damage is done to small grains.

Adult moths migrate into Colorado from the south and may appear at anytime during the late spring or early summer. Moths remain hidden during the day.

Moths lay their eggs on cereal grain leaves. These hatch into small, pale-green worms that travel in a looping motion. As the worms mature they lose this looping type of action.

Armyworm larvae when full grown are 1½ to 2 inches (3.8-5 centimeters) long and greenish-brown in color. They are marked with definite stripes running lengthwise along their bodies. These stripes are white, dark orange and brown.

Armyworm moths are about an inch (2.5 cm) long. They are a tan color with a small white dot in the center of each forewing.

### Chemical Control

Sevin (various formulations) applied at the rate of 1 to 1½ pounds actual insecticide per acre (1.1-1.7 kilograms/hectare) will provide for good control. It should not be applied within 14 days of harvest.

Toxaphene at the rate of 2 pounds actual insecticide per acre (2.2 kg/ha) will control armyworms but treated straw should not be fed to dairy animals or meat animals being finished for slaughter. These animals should not be allowed to graze on treated wheat.

Dylox applied at ½ to 1 pound actual insecticide per acre (.6-1.1 kg/ha) controls armyworms. It should not be applied within 21 days of harvest.

Lannate or Nudrin has recently been cleared for control of armyworms on wheat. Use at rates of ¼ to ½ pound actual insecticide per acre (.3-.6 kg/ha). Do not apply within 7 days of harvest or allow grazing within 10 days of application.

Parathion may be used to control armyworms up to third instar. Use at rate of ¼ pound actual insecticide per acre (.3 kg/ha). Do not apply within 15 days of harvest.

Malathion at rate of 1½ pounds actual insecticide per acre (1.7 kg/ha) also can be used against these pests. Do not apply within 7 days of harvest.

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