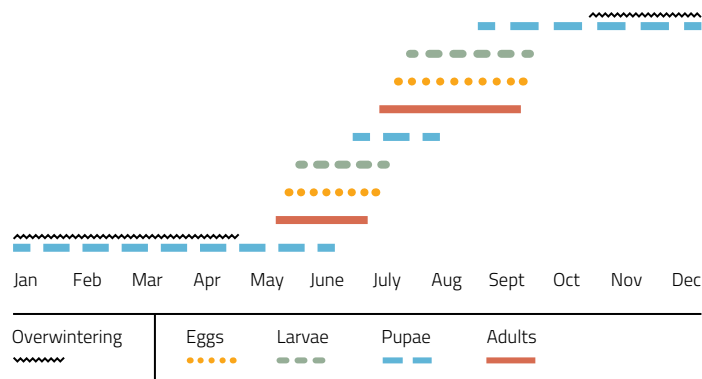




Wheat head armyworm – caterpillar
Mike Dolinski, MikeDolinski@hotmail.com

Armyworm, wheat head

Faronta diffusa (Walker)



Wheat head armyworm – damage
Mike Dolinski, MikeDolinski@hotmail.com

Hosts

Wheat, rye, oats, barley, wild oats, and native and forage grasses (timothy preferred).

Identification

ADULTS: Forewings yellowish-brown with a chocolate-coloured stripe down the length of each; 30-38 mm wing span.

MATURE LARVAE: Up to 25 mm long, tan or green caterpillars with lateral white, gray, green, or brown stripes that appear to taper towards the end. The head is pale brown.

Life Cycle

Overwinter as pupae in earthen cells. Females lay eggs on available host plants, preferring wheat and some grasses. Summer adults have an extended flight period, and lay eggs on warm-season grasses. Two generations per year.

Feeding Damage

ADULTS: Feed on nectar of flowers.

LARVAE: The first larval generation is the most harmful to wheat. Feeds on above-ground plant parts during the night, causing some defoliation; may also feed on maturing grain heads and chew directly into the developing kernels. Damaged kernels appear hollowed out and resemble those damaged by stored grain pests.

Similar Species

No similar larvae, however armyworm larvae (p. 73) may be present near or on the heads.

Monitoring/Scouting

When damage to wheat heads appears, use a sweep net at night to scout for feeding larvae; during the day, examine the top 3-6 cm of soil around the plants for the larvae.

Economic Threshold

None established.

Management Options

BIOLOGICAL: Attacked by several species of parasitoids, predatory insects, and spiders (pp. 111-114).

CULTURAL: Specific cultural methods have not been developed; see also IPM section (p. 3).

CHEMICAL: Infestations are very sporadic and rarely reach levels requiring control.



Wheat head armyworm – adult
Whitney Cranshaw, Colorado State University, Bugwood.org



Field Crop and Forage Pests and their Natural Enemies in Western Canada:

Identification and Management





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Photo Credits:

1. Pea leaf weevil (*Sitona lineatus*) and leaf damage - Jonathon Williams, AAFC
2. *Pteromalus puparum* parasitizing an imported cabbage worm cocoon (*Pieris rapae*) - T. Haye, CABI
3. Lacewing (*Chrysopa* sp.) adult - John Gavloski, Manitoba Ministry of Agriculture
4. Grasshopper - Jesse MacDonald, AAFC



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