

Early Season Corn Insect Damage

Troubleshooting early season corn insect damage based on symptoms is challenging. However, accurate identification is important so you can plan rescue treatments for this year, next year and add the correct information to a field's history. Sometimes, two or more insects may be present in the same field so you might need to tease out symptoms to figure out who's doing what! Symptoms listed on the back of the card and shown in the photos are what's considered typical. Look at several plants before deciding the cause and keep in mind that timing of plant growth stage and insect damage can vary from year to year and in different conditions. For information on treatments and thresholds, consult University of Wisconsin, Division of Extension publication A3646, *Pest Management in Wisconsin Field Crops*.



Plant cut at soil surface
black cutworm



Wilted whorl or deadheart
black cutworm,
wireworm, white grub,
stalk borer, hop vine borer,
sandhill cutworm



Holes in cotyledon (top photo)
seed corn maggot

Holes in leaves (bottom photo)
black cutworm – small larvae



Leaf margin feeding
armyworm



Above ground entry hole
stalk borer



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This card is available at ipcm.wisc.edu

This work is supported by the Crop Protection and Pest Management Program from the USDA National Institute of Food and Agriculture.



EARLY CORN INSECT DAMAGE SYMPTOMS

	Seed corn maggot	White grub	Wireworm	Black cutworm	Stalk borer	Hop vine borer	Sandhill cutworm	True armyworm
What crop stage(s) is damage occurring?	Seed – VE	VE – V4+	Seed – V5+	VE – V5	V1 – V4+	V1 – V4+	VE – V4+	V4 – V10+
Is there poor emergence and/or seed feeding?	Yes	No	Yes	No	No	No	No	No
Is there leaf feeding from the leaf margin in?	No	No	No	Yes, early instars	No	No	No	Yes
Are there holes in the leaf?	Cotyledon only	No	Yes	Possible, early instars	Yes	No	No	Possible, but edges ragged
Are there holes above-ground in the stalk?	No	No	No	No	Yes	No	No	No
Do plants have a wilted whorl (dead heart)?	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
Are plants wilted or stunted?	No	Yes	No	No	No	No	Yes	No
Are plants cut at soil surface?	No	No	No	Yes	No	No	No	No
How is the damage distributed in the field?	Random	Clumped	Clumped	Clumped (usually)	Clumped	Clumped	Clumped	Random (usually)