



Entomology Questions from the Floor

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Over the past few years we have been experiencing problems with sod webworms; are they a new pest? Racine County

No, sod webworms are not a "new" pest! They are native to North America, including Wisconsin. Sod webworms are an important turfgrass insect pest of golf course turf, especially putting greens. However, they are frequently overlooked or misdiagnosed. Larval feeding damage by sod webworms is often mistaken for that of the black cutworm since sod webworm feeding damage symptoms are comparable to the black cutworm. Unfortunately, little published information exists regarding the sod webworm complex and respective biology on golf course turf. Despite this shortcoming, after proper assessment and identification of the pest problem, numerous insecticides are available for control of this problematic pest.

Several vendors have been recommending a new product from DuPont named Provaunt for control of black cutworm and sod webworms; what can you tell me about this new material and is it effective? Dane County

Provaunt is a new product from DuPont that contains the active ingredient indoxacarb. Indoxacarb is a member of a completely new class of chemistry, the oxadiaxines. Provaunt is effective against most surface feeding insects including sod webworms, black cutworm, and armyworms. One of the many beneficial attributes of Provaunt is that it stops feeding damage quickly, within minutes to a few hours after application. One important thing to understand is that Provaunt often performs so quickly that larvae (caterpillars) are terminated below they turf canopy and rarely surface. As a result, some golf course superintendents have raised concern over whether the product was effective. Rest assured, Provaunt is effective; turfgrass managers must begin to learn and experience this attribute since they are accustomed to caterpillars surfacing after an application of other conventional insecticides. Because it is a novel chemistry, it provides an asset from a resistance management aspect. In addition to its excellent performance, Provaunt has an excellent environmental and toxicological profile. Indoxacarb is classified as a reduced-risk active ingredient by the United State Environmental Protection Agency. It also has no required buffer zone around water unlike some of the synthetic pyrethroids.

Why does it seem that the Japanese beetle population is beginning to increase again; we have not had problems with them the past couple of years anywhere near the level we experienced five years ago? Iowa County

Predicting Japanese beetle populations is a very difficult endeavor! Just when you think you have it figured-out, they blind-side you. In general, Japanese beetles tend establish and remain in a respective area for about 8-12 years, thereafter they slowly decline over time. There are various biotic and abiotic factors that influence/impact Japanese beetle as well as other insect populations, including beneficial insects. Biotic factors such as predators, parasites and pathogens have been demonstrated to dramatically reduce Japanese beetle populations over time. However, these biotic factors are readily influenced/impacted by abiotic factors such as moisture, heat, humidity, etc. The bottom line is that although we think we have a handle on predicting Japanese beetle populations, there are other factors than influence populations from year to year. The best pest management strategy is to continue to sample and monitor respective pest populations. ♣



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