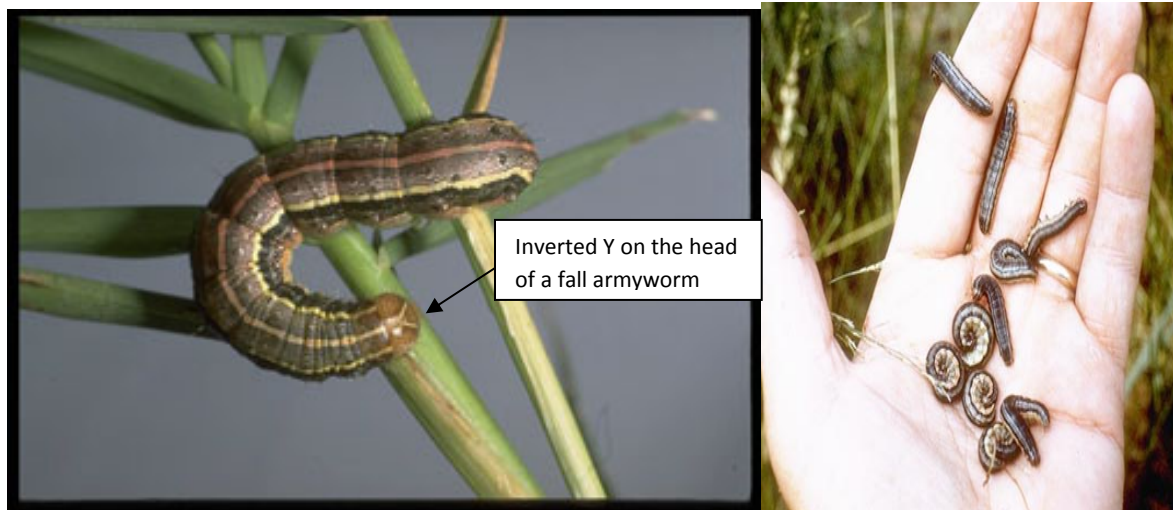


It has been an interesting summer for turfgrass managers and homeowners. In the last couple of weeks I have looked at several athletic fields, golf courses, and home lawns that had a wide range of disease, insect, and weed management problems. I am getting the most calls right now concerning armyworms. Usually, armyworms are found in bermudagrass lawns and sports fields. However, I have seen infestations in St. Augustinegrass. Yesterday, I saw an infestation in carpetgrass as well.

Fall armyworms (*Spodoptera*) are popping up everywhere. I have visited turfgrass locations that are battling armyworms in both southern and northern Louisiana. One population in the Lafayette area was very heavy and pretty much wiped out a soccer field that was in the process of being established.

The adult moth responsible for the armyworm is brown in color with a wingspan of 1 ½ inches wide. The eggs are laid on the leaves of the turfgrass in clusters but it is not unusual to see egg clusters on light colored objects near turf areas such as goal posts or fences. The eggs may hatch in as little as 2 days. The larvae can feed for 2 to 3 weeks causing severe turfgrass damage. Armyworms have chewing mouth parts that completely devour the leaves rendering large areas void of foliage. Eventually, the larvae burrow into the soil and pupate transforming into the adult moth. The process takes approximately 2 weeks. Fall armyworm larvae are 1 ½ inches long and black striped their entire body length. They may be black in color to green. However, the most distinguishing characteristic is the inverted Y on its head.



I have seen populations so severe that the grassy areas appear as though are vibrating from all the armyworm activity. They really vibrate after they have been treated with an insecticide, at least for a little while.

Inspect turfgrass areas for armyworms carefully this time of year because we are really in their peak infestation period. High bird populations feeding in turfgrass are great indicators of armyworms. If you see birds out in your fields and lawns, investigate for the presence of this severe turfgrass pest. Lemon soap solution drench will help make them more visible. Sevin is an easy to find option for treatment. There are other options as well.

Table below provides effective control options for fall armyworms infesting turfgrass.

Insecticide	Common Trade Name(s)
bifenthrin	Talstar, Quali-Pro Golf and Nursery
carbaryl	Sevin, Carbaryl
Chlorantraniliprole	Acelepryn
halofenozide	Mach 2, Macho
trichlorfon	Dylox

Ron Strahan