

Commercial Horticulture

Special Alert

August 30, 2021

**In This Issue...**

- Fall armyworms
- Conferences

[Pest Predictive Calendar](#)

**IPMnet**

**Integrated Pest  
Management for  
Commercial Horticulture**  
[extension.umd.edu/ipm](http://extension.umd.edu/ipm)

If you work for a commercial horticultural business in the area, you can report insect, disease, weed or cultural plant problems (**include location and insect stage**) found in the landscape or nursery to [sgill@umd.edu](mailto:sgill@umd.edu)

**Coordinator Weekly IPM Report:**

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**Regular Contributors:**

Pest and Beneficial Insect Information: Stanton Gill and Paula Shrewsbury (Extension Specialists) and Nancy Harding, Faculty Research Assistant

Disease Information: Karen Rane (Plant Pathologist) and David Clement (Extension Specialist)

Weed of the Week: Chuck Schuster (Retired Extension Educator)

Cultural Information: Ginny Rosenkranz (Extension Educator, Wicomico/Worcester/Somerset Counties)

Fertility Management: Andrew Ristvey (Extension Specialist, Wye Research & Education Center)

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**Fall Armyworm- Hyperactivity**

By: Stanton Gill

We put a report of fall armyworm damaging turf in several locations during the month of August in the Friday, August 27<sup>th</sup> IPM Alert. Since then, I have received many emails telling me professional horticulturists and agronomists are seeing damage in Germantown, Gaithersburg, Clarksburg, parts of Howard, Frederick, Anne Arundel, Calvert, Prince Georges, and

Baltimore Counties. Stuart Frazier, Aquarius Supply, is reporting heavy damage in the Richmond and Chantilly areas of Virginia. We are receiving calls reporting areas where they have completely denuded lawns.

Fall armyworm is a native pest to North America. The weather has been perfect for it to flourish in August. The fall armyworm (FAW, *Spodoptera*



**Earlier instars of fall armyworm caterpillars are greenish in color**

**Photo: Frank Peairs, Colorado State University, [Bugwood.org](http://Bugwood.org)**

*frugiperda*) is a destructive pest that can feed on 80 different crop species, including corn and more importantly to the horticulture industry, turf. It clearly prefers grasses.

This native pest has been exported to other countries. FAW was first reported in Africa in 2016, and has now been documented in more than 30 African countries. It is relatively new to African farmers, where corn is a staple crop for more than 300 million subsistence farmers and small-scale producers. USDA is working on helping growers in these countries deal with this pest.



Note the "Y" pattern on the head capsule of a later instar fall armyworm caterpillar

Photo: Frank Peairs, Colorado State University, Bugwood.org

Back to the lawn situation. Most of the larvae pictures we are receiving are later instar larvae, which tend to be difficult to control. The later instar larvae have distinct inverted "Y" pattern on the head capsule. The larvae have 6 instar stages. In the later instars, the larvae have 4 black spots on the last two abdominal sections with setae (hairs) projecting from the center of the black spot. Young, early instar larvae are greenish in color and have a black head capsule. By the second instar, the larvae head capsule becomes more orange.

They will be pupating very shortly. The FAW normally pupates in the soil at a depth 2 to 8 cm. The larva constructs a loose cocoon by tying together particles of soil with silk. The cocoon is oval in shape and 20 to 30 mm in length. If the soil is too hard, larvae may web together leaf debris and other material to form a cocoon on the soil surface. The pupa is reddish brown in color, measuring 14 to 18 mm in length and about 4.5 mm in width. Duration of the pupal stage is about 8 to 9 days during the summer, but reaches 20 to 30 days during cooler weather. We are supposed to get heavy rain Wednesday followed by cooler weather.

### **Control Options:**

Late instar larvae, which is what we are seeing right now, are very difficult to control. If we see another generation active this fall, and after monitoring turf closely for early instar larvae, you need to decide if control is needed later this fall. There are several options available including **chlorantranilprole (Acelepyrn)**, **indoxacarb (Provaunt)**, and **spinosad A and D (Conserve) SC**.

We are interested if fall armyworms are damaging turf in other parts of Maryland, VA, and DC. Please let us know if you see damage by contacting me at [Sgill@umd.edu](mailto:Sgill@umd.edu).

### **Conferences**

#### **Diagnostic Session**

We will be holding one more plant diagnostic session for nutrient problems, diseases, and insects on **September 22nd** at the Central Maryland Research and Education Center (11975 Homewood Road, Ellicott City, MD 21042) from 12:30 – 3:30 p.m. We encourage participants to bring samples of nutrient disorders and insect and disease problems for diagnosis by David Clement, Karen Rane, Stanton Gill, and Andrew Ristvey, University of Maryland Extension.

## Urban Tree Summit

Dates: September 8, 9, 16, and 23, 2021

Montgomery County Parks and Casey Trees, Washington D.C., present the tenth annual conference — Urban Tree Summit. Presentations will focus on the health and welfare of trees in our increasingly developed landscapes. Learn from some of the country's leading experts about innovative efforts to plant, protect, and preserve trees in urban and suburban settings.

**Registration Link:** <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/urban-tree-summit-tickets-155804456323>

## MNLGA Nursery Field Day

September 16, 2021

Location: Fieldstone Nursery, Parkton, MD

Go to the MNLGA website for [program and registration information](#)

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