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Fall Armyworm Coming to Your Lawn

Many calls have come into the office this week regarding masses of worms showing up in the lawn, on sidewalks and in driveways.

These small 1 to 2 inch worms are likely armyworms. They are actually caterpillars who have been given the name 'armyworm' due to large numbers that appear at one time.

These larvae move through the yard quickly, eating as they go. They enjoy the green leaf tissue of legumes and grasses or related plants like corn. They may spend the night devouring the lawn, going unnoticed until morning when the damage has already been done.

The caterpillars vary in color from green to brown or black with thin stripes running the length of the body. The head can be brown to red but will have an inverted 'V' or some say 'Y' on top. They will move in large populations.

Control is up to the homeowner based on what is at stake. They usually move very quickly through the lawn however the lawn will usually recover. If you catch them before they start and wish to use chemical control you may try one of the following: Acephate, Bifenthrin, Carbaryl, Malathion, Permethrin, or Spinosad.



Left: Photo of *Spodoptera frugiperda* (J.E. Smith) courtesy of John C. French Sr., Retired, Universities: Auburn, GA, Clemson and U of MO, Bugwood.org and Right: Photo - by Scott Stewart, IPM Extension Specialist, University of Tennessee