

Wireworms

Many genera and species

(Origin: Native and Exotic)



Wireworm (Click Beetle) Adult

Primary Host: Many vegetable crops and sod.

Damage: Feed on seeds and seedlings of corn, beans and peas causing wilting and often death of the plant. Feed on root crops, reducing marketability.

Management: Can be detected with baits (untreated grain or potato) buried underground before planting. Dig up after 10 days and search for wireworms. More than 1 per bait station can result in economic damage and treatment will be necessary.

Biocontrols: Predatory ground beetles and a fungus disease may help control them.

Cultural Controls: May be a problem if the field had been in sod or fallow the year before. Crop rotation may avoid infestation.

Physical Controls: Cultivate at regular intervals to make it hard for larvae to develop and to reduce egg-laying.

Chemical Controls: Contact your local Penn State County Extension Agent for more information. <http://www.extension.psu.edu/extmap.html>

Insect Description:

Adults: Called click beetles, usually brown in color with streamlined bodies, tapering toward the rear. The joint between the thorax and abdomen is flexible enabling them to “click,” flipping up into the air to flip over when placed on their backs.

Pupae: Found in cells in the ground in late summer or fall.

Larvae: Slender, smooth, hard-bodied, wire-like; chestnut-brown; ¾-1½” long.

Eggs: Females lay them mainly around grass roots.

Life History: Overwinter as larval or adult stages in the ground. In early spring the adults become active. Adults can live 10-12 months spending most of the time in the soil. Wireworms can remain in the larval stage 3-7 years, depending on species. These are mainly pests in fields that have been in sod for many years. Serious infestations are usually localized to a single field or portions of a field.



Wireworm Larva