

# INSECT WATCH

## TOP 5 INSECTS TO WATCH FOR

### BATTLE RIVER IMPLEMENTS

### AGRONOMY UPDATE

June 2016



Hello Everyone,

What a difference a month makes! When I last sat down to do a newsletter, the main concern was a dried out seedbed and frost risk. Now a month later, we have received enough rain to get a good start on the crops, herbicide spraying is wrapping up for most people and the focus is shifting to diseases and insects. So while there is a break in the action, I thought it would be a good time

to give everybody an update on what level of risk we can expect to see from some of the major pests we have been dealing with over the last several years.



## CUTWORMS

As of the middle of June, there were still new reports of cutworm damage coming in from all parts of the province. The larvae will continue to feed into early July and damage can occur quickly, so be sure to continue to scout fields for these guys. Look for bare spots on south facing slopes as the first sign of trouble and also watch for places that had bare ground or late blooming weed patches last fall that may have attracted adults.

**Look for bare spots on south facing slopes**

Take a shovel and dig in the rows where the crop should be. If you can't find the cutworms themselves, you may at least be able to confirm their presence by finding the damage.



# BERTHA ARMY WORMS

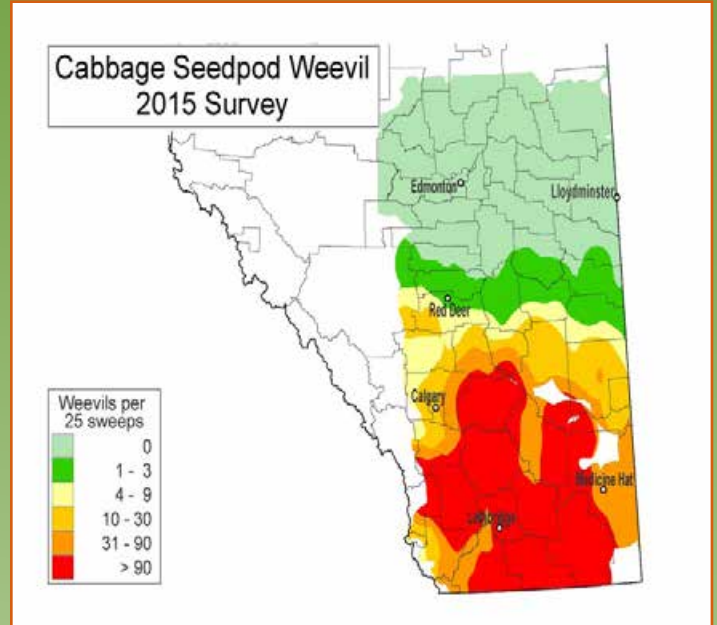


Over the past several years Bertha's have caused considerable damage in East Central Alberta. However, it looks like we may be due for a break from this particular pest. According to Alberta Ag, expect populations to be trending down in 2016. Parasitism and diseases caused a population collapse in much of central Alberta in 2015 and early results from pheromone traps this year seem to indicate a lower population. If you are interested in a more detailed look at populations in your area use this link to take you to the Pest Monitoring website.

***Parasitism and diseases caused a population collapse in much of central Alberta in 2015***

[http://www.agric.gov.ab.ca/app68/listings/bertha/bertha\\_map.jsp](http://www.agric.gov.ab.ca/app68/listings/bertha/bertha_map.jsp)

# CABBAGE SEED POD WEEVIL



As you can see from the 2015 survey map above, cabbage seed pod weevils are a pest that we are going to be dealing with in the near future, if not this year for some of you. The time to check your field for this pest is during early flowering. As there is usually only one generation of seed pod weevils per year, the crops most at risk are the first to bloom as they will attract the largest infestation of the adults. While the adults can do some damage by feeding on blossoms, the greatest damage is done by the

***... cabbage seed pod weevils are a pest that we are going to be dealing with***



larvae feeding on the pods. If spraying is necessary, the best time to do it is at about 10% bloom stage of the canola to avoid adults laying eggs in newly forming pods. However be sure not to spray too early as adults will continue to invade the field for about 10 days after initial flowering. The



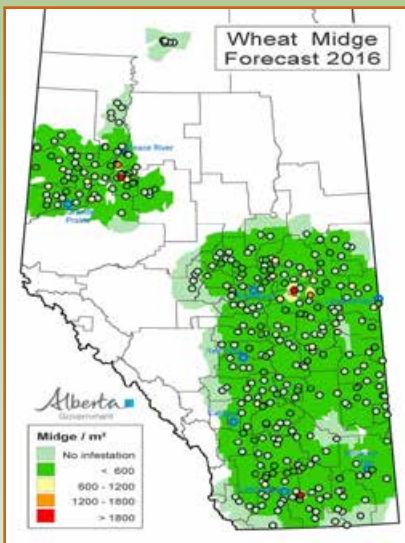
Canola Council puts the economic threshold at 20 weevils per 10 sweeps while the Alberta Ag site talks about 3 to 4 weevils per single sweep at 10% to 20% bloom stage. Like all thresholds, these numbers will depend on the cost of chemical and the price of the commodity. For more details on life cycle and economic impact follow this link.

[http://www1.agric.gov.ab.ca/\\$Department/deptdocs.nsf/all/prm15595](http://www1.agric.gov.ab.ca/$Department/deptdocs.nsf/all/prm15595)

## ORANGE BLOSSOM WHEAT MIDGE



More good news here! After several years of trending upwards, the wheat midge population is forecasted to be on a downward trend in 2016. This does not mean you should stop scouting for this pest, as once the population has become established in the area it will never completely disappear again.



Wheat midge activity can be predicted by using Growing Degree Days (GDD). Research has shown that adult females start emerging at around 700 GDD – by 725 GDD about 10% emergence has occurred, at 800 GDD 50% of the females are flying and by the time you hit 900 GDD, about 90% of the emergence has happened. You can find out where you sit on GDD by going to your local weather

station by following this link. <http://www.agric.gov.ab.ca/acs/alberta-weather-data-viewer.jsp?stations=imcin>

The other part of the equation is to understand when your wheat is at risk. Wheat Midge can lay eggs on the florets any time from the emergence of the head until the end of anthesis. Once anthesis has occurred, the midge can't lay eggs on that floret anymore. Traditionally, early seeding has been an effective way of avoiding midge damage, as these crops are often done with

**Wheat Midge can lay eggs on the florets any time from the emergence of the head until the end of anthesis.**

anthesis before the majority of the wheat midge flight occurs. Because our spring was so unusually warm, that may not be effective this year – so unless you had your wheat in the ground prior to May 3rd or 4th in most cases, your crop is at risk. For tips on identifying and scouting for wheat midge, visit [http://www1.agric.gov.ab.ca/\\$department/deptdocs.nsf/all/agdex2507#life](http://www1.agric.gov.ab.ca/$department/deptdocs.nsf/all/agdex2507#life).

## DIAMONDBACK MOTHS

Diamondback moths are a species that does not overwinter in our area. Infestations are dependent solely on strong winds out of the SE blowing adults into Alberta during the early spring. Because there is such a strong correlation, the Prairie Pest Monitoring Network actually tracks wind trajectories as they give us early indications about pests such as the Diamondback and leaf hoppers. Unfortunately,



winds this spring have been favourable for an outbreak of Diamondback moths and many of the pheromone traps in central Alberta are already compiling numbers that should have you watching out for them in the upcoming weeks. Economic thresholds have been reached when you start finding 2 to 3 larvae per plant in the field. For the most up to date survey results for your area, go to [http://www.agric.gov.ab.ca/app68/listings/diamondback/diamondback\\_map.jsp](http://www.agric.gov.ab.ca/app68/listings/diamondback/diamondback_map.jsp)

**winds this spring have been favourable for an outbreak of Diamondback moths**

While the insects listed above represent the ones I think of as having the greatest interest to the area this year, they are certainly not the only ones you should be monitoring as you check your fields. Pea Leaf Weevils, Cereal Leaf Beetles, Wheat Stem Sawflies, and even Swede Midge are pests you should become familiar with. Some like sawfly made their presence known in Flagstaff County last year and others like Swede Midge have yet to make an appearance, but could find their way over from Saskatchewan in the next couple of years.

As one grower told me recently, "These are some of the nicest, most even crops that I have ever seen". We have a great start on the 2016 crop season. Make sure you don't share any more of your crop than you have to with the various insect pests that will be sure to move in to take advantage of all that green leaf material we have growing out there!

There is just one last thing that I would like to mention. As we ended the 2015 season, I was sure that we would have widespread issues with grasshoppers this year. They were everywhere last fall, and I was expecting a huge hatch this spring. The widespread moisture received towards the end of May both delayed the emergence of grasshoppers and decreased their impact. That rain destroyed eggs, drowned newly hatched hoppers on the surface, and greatly improved our humidity, which increases fungal diseases among the survivors. So in more ways than one, that rain may have saved our summer. Continued hot, dry weather would have led to ideal conditions for hoppers.....and we all know what that looks like!



*As always, any feedback, questions or comments are welcome. Also, if anybody has ideas for topics they would like to see addressed, just drop me a line at [wspurrill@briltd.com](mailto:wspurrill@briltd.com) and I will be happy to oblige! Here is to hoping everyone had a safe June and will have a relaxing July!*

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