

# Kansas Insect Newsletter

For Agribusinesses, Applicators, Consultants and Extension Personnel



Department of Entomology  
123 West Waters Hall  
K-State Research and Extension  
Manhattan, Kansas 66506  
785-532-5891  
<http://www.entomology.ksu.edu/extension>

---

July 25, 2014 No. 15

---

## Walnut Caterpillar

We have seen an “explosion” of the walnut caterpillar (*Datana integerrima*) in several portions of Kansas. Walnut caterpillar feeds on the leaves of walnut, pecan, hickory, and may also feed on birch, oak, and apple.

The larvae tend to feed in groups/clusters consuming all leaves on a single branch before moving to another branch to devour leaves. Excessive defoliation may result in sunscald that could weaken trees and increase susceptibility to wood-boring insects. Walnut caterpillar overwinters as a pupa that is located beneath the soil surface under a host tree. Adults are robust moths that emerge from pupae in mid-to-late spring, depending on temperature and host plant growth. The brown forewings possess irregular dark cross lines. Females deposit eggs on leaf undersides with each female capable of laying >300 eggs in a mass. The first instar larvae or caterpillars skeletonize leaves, whereas the second instar larvae feed on the entire leaf with the exception of the mid-vein. The later instar (third and fourth) larvae, which are red in color, feed on the entire leaf including the petiole. Larvae feed for approximately one month before reaching maturity. Full-grown larvae are 2.0 inches in length, with yellow stripes on the side, and are gray-black and covered with long, gray to white hairs. When disturbed, larvae will arch their head and the end of the abdomen in order to ward off predators. When it is time to molt, they all gather together on a branch or trunk and molt simultaneously, leaving patches of fur-like hair. There may be one to two generations per year. The primary effective means of dealing with infestations of walnut caterpillars are to hand-pick caterpillars and place in a container of soapy water, use a forceful water spray to quickly dislodge caterpillars, or apply insecticides with one of the following active ingredients: acephate, spinosad, malathion,



# Kansas Insect Newsletter

July 25, 2014 No. 15

---

cyfluthrin, permethrin, or bifenthrin. Although the eggs and larvae of walnut caterpillars are susceptible to parasitoids, the female parasitoids may not attack enough eggs or larvae to substantially impact the population.



Raymond Cloyd

---

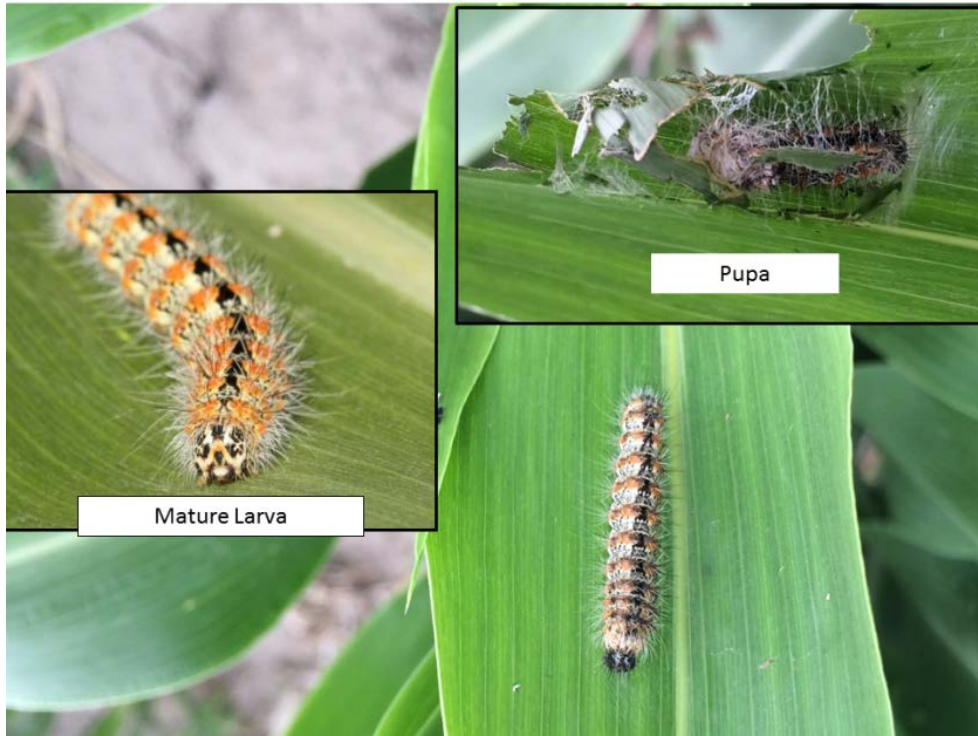
## Cattail Caterpillars

Cattail caterpillars continue to be very active in sorghum (see photos). There are various stages, from relatively small ones to pupae. Parasitoids are also very active parasitizing caterpillars (see photo 2). In one field of 8-9 leaf sorghum, 40% of the cattail caterpillars were parasitized. These larvae eat relatively big holes in the leaves, sometimes only leaving the midrib (see photo 2); however this early leaf feeding has not been shown to have a negative impact on yield, but it does cause growers to become concerned.

# Kansas Insect Newsletter

July 25, 2014 No. 15

---



*Photo 1*



*Photo 2*

# Kansas Insect Newsletter

July 25, 2014 No. 15

---

## Potato Leafhopper

Potato leafhoppers also continue to be active in alfalfa. There are many small nymphs, which often get overlooked or mistaken for aphids. There are still eggs remaining in stems. Swathing within 10-14 days should alleviate, if not eliminate, the problem. However, some fields have recently been swathed so an insecticide application should be considered. All registered products seem to work well and re-infestation after application is not probable. Be sure to check REI and PHI for any product applied.

## Sunflower Head Moths

Checked two fields in Dickinson County this past week for sunflower head moth. Both fields were approximately 90% flowered. No sunflower head moths were found. NONE! This is really unusual! However, flowers need to continue to be monitored as head moth infestations can be initiated quickly and end up in a serious infestation.

## Grasshoppers

Grasshoppers are still plentiful and growing. It is still a good idea to spray them while they are not yet fully grown and are still in the weedy and/or grassy areas, before they move out into the crops.

Jeff Whitworth

Holly Davis-Schwartz

---

## Insect Diagnostic Laboratory Report

<http://entomology.k-state.edu/extension/diagnostician/recent-samples.html>

Eva Zurek

---

# Kansas Insect Newsletter

July 25, 2014 No. 15

---

Sincerely,

Raymond A. Cloyd  
Professor and Extension Specialist  
Horticultural Entomology/Integrated Pest Management  
Phone: 785-532-4750  
Fax: 785-532-6232  
e-mail: [rcloyd@ksu.edu](mailto:rcloyd@ksu.edu)

Jeff Whitworth  
Extension Specialist  
Field Crops  
phone: 785/532-5656  
e-mail: [jwhitwor@ksu.edu](mailto:jwhitwor@ksu.edu)

Holly Davis-Schwarting  
Research Associate  
Phone: (785) 532-4739  
e-mail: [holly3@ksu.edu](mailto:holly3@ksu.edu)

Eva Zurek  
Insect Diagnostician  
Phone: (785) 532-4710  
e-mail: [ezurek@ksu.edu](mailto:ezurek@ksu.edu)



Kansas State University is committed to making its services, activities and programs accessible to all participants. If you have special requirements due to a physical, vision, or hearing disability, contact *LOCAL NAME, PHONE NUMBER*. (For TDD, contact Michelle White-Godinet, Assistant Director of Affirmative Action, Kansas State University, 785-532-4807.)

## **Kansas State University Agricultural Experiment Station and Cooperative Extension Service**

K-State Research and Extension is an equal opportunity provider and employer. Issued in furtherance of Cooperative Extension Work, Acts of May 8 and June 30, 1914, as amended. Kansas State University, County Extension Councils, Extension Districts, and United States Department of Agriculture Cooperating. John D. Floros, Director.