

# Manitoba Insect and Disease Update

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To report observations on insects or plant pathogens that may be of interest or importance to farmers and agronomists in Manitoba, please send messages to the above contact address.

To be placed on an E-mail list so you will be notified immediately when new Manitoba Insect Updates are posted, please contact John Gavloski at the address or numbers listed above.

## Recent Insect and Plant Pathogen Activity

### Canola

**Seedling Blight:** Some early-seeded canola that has recently emerged is showing symptoms of a number of different stresses including flea beetle damage, wind damage (sandblasting), and seedling blight. Seedling blight can be caused by a number of different pathogens including *Rhizoctonia solani*, *Fusarium* spp., and *Pythium* spp. These pathogens have multiple hosts and are widespread across the province. Symptoms of this disease include failed germination, decayed roots and stems (especially below the cotyledons), and pinched stems at the soil surface known as wirestem (Figure 1). Although the canola seed is treated the fungicide's activity only lasts for 2-3 weeks after planting. Note that this is a shorter timeframe than the protection by the insecticide portion of the seed treatment. In some areas of the province canola fields that experienced multiple stresses are being re-seeded. Consider soil moisture and temperature when making re-seeding decisions. Warmer soils will result in faster emergence and adequate protection by the seed treatment through the seedling stage when they are most susceptible to seedling blights. With drier soils and no rain in the forecast consider re-seeding to a cereal which can better withstand drought stress.



Figure 1. Symptoms of wirestem on canola seedlings (cotyledons also showing flea beetle damage)

**Flea beetles:** Some of the early-seeded canola fields are now in a situation where the seed treatments are no longer effective in killing flea beetles, and the canola is still in the seedling stage. Anytime canola is seeding in situations where germination and early-season growth may be delayed there is this risk. In such situations, the crop needs to be monitored for the level of flea beetle feeding occurring. Flea beetle feeding will be highest on warm, calm days. Once the plants get 3 or 4 true leaves, they can normally compensate quite well for flea beetle feeding,



Figure 2. Flea beetles and flea beetle feeding on canola

Minor feeding damage from flea beetles is normal, even when the seed treatments are effective. If the canola has reached the point where the seed treatments may not be effective anymore, and flea beetles are actively feeding on the plants, a nominal threshold of about 25% defoliation is suggested as a level where the application of a foliar insecticide may be economical. Estimating percent defoliation can be challenging. The publication at the following link has a couple of tables (tables 2 and 3) which may help in assessing the percent defoliation and determine whether a foliar insecticide may be economical.

<http://www.canolawatch.org/2011/05/09/estimating-flea-beetle-damage-in-canola/>

## General Crop Scouting

**Cutworms:** Cutworms are being noticed in some fields, but the only population of economic levels reported so far is from a corn field in the Elm Creek area. The main species being found seem to be dark-sided cutworms, and some dingy and redbacked cutworms. Please let me know as soon as possible if you are seeing high populations of cutworms, as we are trying to collect as many as possible for a research project on parasitoids of cutworms (see “research” section below for more details).

## Surveys and Forecasts

**Diamondback Moth Monitoring:** Diamondback moths were found in the pheromone-baited trap early in 2012. The area around Morris has had the highest counts, and all the higher counts have been in the eastern part of Manitoba. West of Carman the counts have all been low, with the highest cumulative count so far being 6 at Oakburn and a trap north of Brandon. Monitoring for adults of diamondback will continue into June. Whether or not these higher populations of adult moths in the Red River Valley and Eastern Manitoba result in high populations of larva later in the season will depend on factors such as rates of egg laying and the effects of weather and natural enemies on the population.

Table 1. Highest cumulative trap counts for diamondback moth in Manitoba as of May 17, 2012

Location	Cumulative Trap count
Morris (East)	143
Morris (West)	62
Carman	37
Emerson	32
Beausejour	29
St. Joseph	25

The full data set for adult counts of diamondback moth can be viewed at:

<http://www.gov.mb.ca/agriculture/crops/insects/db/index.html>

## Research

**Cutworms:** Got cutworms? Want an iPad? If that sounds like a fair trade to you, read the following link from the canola council of Canada.

<http://www.canolawatch.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/05/Cutworm-collection-letter-May16-Final-3.pdf>

Cutworms are needed for a project studying parasitism in our local populations of cutworms. This project aims to gain a better understanding of cutworm parasitoids, and whether there are ways we can create conditions to enhance levels of these parasitoids. So please let us know if you are finding cutworms in any fields. Save some for the study, or we will come to the field to collect them. Please contact Dr. Barb Sharonowski at the University of Manitoba (204-474-7485) or myself (204-745-5668).

**Pastures or fields containing clover needed:** We are trying to determine if we potentially have an insect called red clover casebearer in Manitoba, and if so in what levels. If you happen to know of any fields or pastures with lots of red clover, white clover, or alsike clover, and don't mind having a trap placed in the field, please contact me and let me know (204-745-5668).

**Soybeans/alfalfa/pea fields in close proximity:** For a study on the population dynamics of aphids and some of their natural enemies, we are looking for soybean and pea fields next to or close to alfalfa fields. Having fields of all 3 crops in close proximity would be even better, and ideal for the study. If you have such a situation and don't mind entomologists removing some of the insects from your field periodically, please contact Dr. Alejandro Costamagna at the University of Manitoba (202-474-9007) or myself (204-745-5668).

## Insect Identification Quiz

**Question:** While digging in the field you find a few larvae as shown in Figure 3. Upon close inspection you notice they do not have any legs, hence they cannot be cutworms. What are these and should you be concerned?



Figure 3.

**Answer:** These are larvae of crane flies. The species of crane fly larvae typically found in crops on the prairies are not pests of any crop, and generally feed on decaying plant material.