Issue 12 – August 7, 2025

# Manitoba Crop Pest Update

Seasonal Reports  Weekly Weather Maps  Insects

## Summary

**Insects:** **Bertha armyworm** larvae are being found at high levels in some canola fields in the western part of the Central region, and eastern part of the Southwest region. A few fields have had insecticides applied over the past week for bertha armyworm. Some pathogen activity is also showing up in the bertha armyworm population. **Twospotted spider mites** continue to be noticed in soybeans in the Eastern and Central regions, particularly around field edges. There has been some insecticide applications, bu mainly spot spraying or field edges. **True armyworm** continues to be noticed in cereals in some areas.

**Weeds:** Weed escapes are becoming more noticeable as crops mature. Continue to monitor and do not let them go to seed if herbicide resistance is suspected.

## Entomology

### Bertha armyworm

There have been reports of diseased bertha armyworm being found at the top of plants in a few locations. Pathogens known to infect and kill bertha armyworms include a nuclear polyhedrosis virus (NPV), and a fungal pathogen (*Entomophthora* sp). NPV-infected larvae often hang from canola plants, almost completely liquefied. Its contents will often ooze from the easily punctured cuticle.

Photo by Lucas Badiou – Fortified Agronomy

The symptoms caused by the fungus are quite characteristic and are usually noticed when bertha armyworm larvae are in the 5th and 6th (final) instars. Entomophthoran fungus-infected bertha armyworm larvae will often turn a lighter brown colour just before they die. Upon death the larvae are a light beige to white colour (due to the presence of erupting fungal hyphae) and will frequently be found attached to the canola plant. The dead larvae are characterized by their dry and brittle texture, often breaking apart when handled. This fungus is an important natural control agent but is dependent on the right environmental conditions for spore

Report compiled by John Gavloski, Kim Brown
Entomologist, Weeds Specialist, Manitoba Agriculture
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Manitoba

germination (high relative humidity and warm temperatures) and infection of bertha armyworm larvae (Erlandson and Mason, 1997. In: Biological Control of Insect Pests in Canola).

# Weeds

## Milkweed

Common milkweed (*Asclepias syriaca*) is becoming more and more troublesome in crops. This perennial weed reproduces by underground rootstocks and seeds and is frequently spread from ditches onto cropped land. Preventing seed production is crucial and now is the time to be mowing milkweed plants before seeds are mature and get dispersed. Multiple herbicide applications are required to control common milkweed. In-crop herbicides can hold back milkweed plants but will not eradicate this perennial weed. Consider pre-harvest glyphosate especially where the following crop has limited herbicide options for milkweed.

## Kochia

We have testing kits available for suspected group 14-resistant kochia. Contact me to arrange getting testing done so we can monitor the spread of group 14 resistance.

# Forecast

## Bertha Armyworm

The population of adult moths of bertha armyworms were monitored during the flight and egg-laying period in June and July using pheromone-baited traps. Bertha armyworms were found in all 83 traps that counts were reported from. Cumulative counts remained in the low risk category in most traps (73 of the 83 traps), however traps near Makaroff and Durban in the Northwest region, Kenton and Whitehead in the Southwest region, Carman and Brunkild in the Central region, and Broad Valley, Lundar, Pleasant Home and Arborg in the Interlake region increased into the uncertain risk category.

The highest cumulative trap count was 506 from a trap near Makaroff in the Northwest region.

There have been reports of high levels of larvae of bertha armyworm in some canola fields near Sidney, south of Gladstone, Holland and Cypress River in the Central region, and Glenboro in the Southwest region.

**Table 2**. Highest cumulative counts of bertha armyworm (*Mamestra configurata*) in pheromone-baited traps for five agricultural regions as of August 7, 2025.

| Region | Nearest Town | Trap Count |
|---|---|---|
| Northwest | Makaroff | 506 |
| | Durban | 358 |
| | Dropmore | 259 |
| | Swan River | 219 |
| | The Pas | 142 |
| Southwest | Kenton | 480 |
| | Whitehead | 317 |
| | Lyleton | 236 |
| | Shoal Lake | 218 |
| | Rapid City | 214 |
| Central | Carman | 384 |
| | Brunkild | 309 |
| | Baldur | 212 |
| | St. Claude | 211 |
| | Cypress River | 173 |
| Eastern | Ste. Anne | 170 |
| | Tourond | 108 |
| Interlake | Broad Valley | 374 |
| | Lundar | 332 |
| | Pleasant Home | 326 |
| | Arborg | 306 |
| | Riverton | 159 |

← Highest cumulative count

0-300 = low risk
300-900 = uncertain risk
900-1,200 = moderate risk
1,200+ = high risk

Highest counts in each region of Manitoba and a monitoring summary are updated weekly on the Insect Page of the Manitoba Agriculture website at: https://www.gov.mb.ca/agriculture/crops/insects/pubs/bertha-armyworm-monitoring.pdf

Information on the biology of bertha armyworm and monitoring larval levels can be found at: https://www.gov.mb.ca/agriculture/crops/insects/pubs/bertha-armyworm-factsheet.pdf

## True armyworms

Larvae of armyworms (*Mythimna unipuncta*), sometimes also called true armyworms, can cause significant feeding injury to cereals and forage grasses when levels are abundant. Adult moths of armyworms migrate to Manitoba in the spring from overwintering sites from the southern US. A network of pheromone-baited traps were monitored from early-May until late-July to determine how early and in what levels populations of armyworms have arrive.

Armyworm moths were caught in all 32 traps. The highest cumulative counts were in the Interlake and Eastern regions. In the Interlake region, there were three traps with cumulative counts above 200, and a trap near Riverton exceeded 400. All three traps in the Eastern region had cumulative counts above 200. In the Southwest region counts were lower; there were three traps with cumulative counts above 50.

**Table 3**. Highest cumulative counts of armyworms in pheromone-baited traps for agricultural regions in Manitoba as of August 2, 2025.

| Region | Nearest Town | Trap Count | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Southwest | Lyleton | 74 | |
| | Brandon | 61 | |
| | Pierson | 55 | |
| | Isabella | 29 | |
| | Birtle | 14 | |
| Central | Arnaud | 37 | |
| | Ermerson | 3 | |
| Eastern | Kleefeld | 340 | |
| | New Bothwell | 256 | |
| | Greenland | 203 | |
| Interlake | Riverton | 407 | ← Highest cumulative count |
| | Famnes | 308 | |
| | Washow Bay | 273 | |
| | Zbaraz | 144 | |
| | Fisher Branch | 64 | |

Those scouting cereals and forage grasses may want to check to see what armyworm larval levels are like in their fields. Armyworm larvae have been noticed in some fields, and some fields of small grain cereals and forage grasses in the Interlake, Eastern and Central regions have been sprayed for armyworms.

A map showing armyworm counts from Manitoba, Eastern Canada, and several Northeast U.S. states is available at:
https://experience.arcgis.com/experience/7164d23d488246d198dcf7a07d8c9021/page/Home/?views=Welcome.
Go to the link “TAW”. The “Play” button at the bottom can be set so the map automatically advances (click middle arrow), or set to “Stop” and the arrows at either side of the button used to go forward or backward a week at a time.

### Grasshopper survey

A reminder for those participating in the grasshopper survey that counts are done during August, when the majority of grasshoppers are in the adult stage.

Agronomists and farmers who would also be interested in estimating grasshopper numbers in or around any of the fields they are in, and having this information included in the survey, are encouraged to see the survey protocol (at the link below) for more details of the survey and where to send data. Your counts would be welcomed.

Estimates of grasshopper levels can be collected during regular farm visits. "Estimates" of grasshopper populations is stressed as it will not be possible to accurately count grasshoppers along a field edge or ditch area as they will be moving around as you get near the area of the count. But estimates of what is present gives us some idea of the relative numbers that are present in different areas.

Data from the survey, along with weather data during the egg laying period of the grasshoppers, will be used to produce a grasshopper forecast for 2026.

The protocol and data sheet for the grasshopper survey is at:
https://www.gov.mb.ca/agriculture/crops/insects/pubs/grasshopper-survey-protocol-revised-2025-07.pdf

## Identification Quiz

This well camoflauged Hemipteran was found on some canola plants on the headlands by a ditch. What is it?

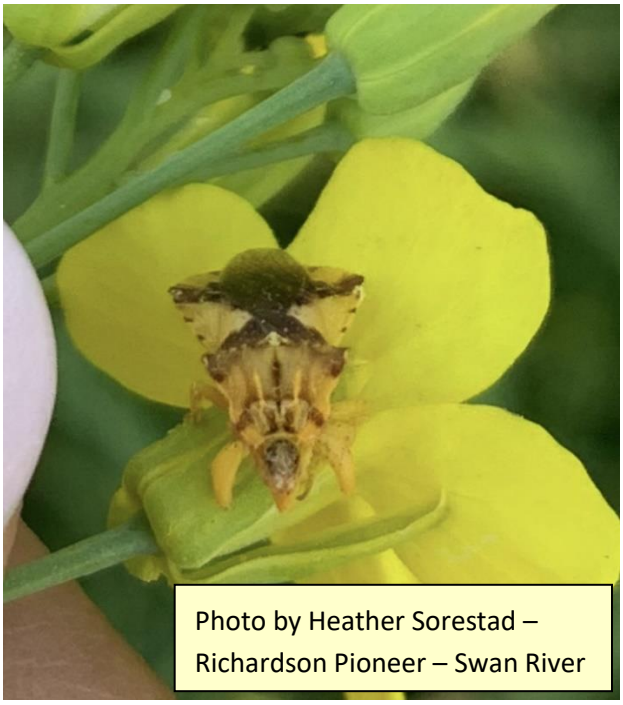

Photo by Heather Sorestad – Richardson Pioneer – Swan River

**Answer**: This is an ambush bug, They belong to a subfamily of assassin bugs called Phymatinae. Compared to typical assassin bugs, ambush bugs are shorter, stouter, more colorful, and have larger heads in proportion to

their bodies. They are predators, and as the name may imply, with the help of their camouflage they lie in wait for prey to come to them. They subdue their prey with an immobilizing venom.

Note the large raptorial forelegs in the photo. Ambush bugs can capture prey ten or more times their own size. There are two species of ambush bugs in Manitoba. I have fun looking for them on the goldenrod in late-summer, on which they can sometimes be very common. If your lucky, you may get to see one with a meal.

To **report observations** on insects, plant pathogens, or weeds that may be of interest or importance to farmers and agronomists in Manitoba, please send messages to one of the following Manitoba Agriculture Pest Management Specialists.

John Gavloski, Entomologist (204) 750-0594
Kim Brown, Weed Specialist (431) 344-0239