**Fall Armyworm**

**Segment for Week of 13 September 2021 757-550-1854**

This is Steve Rulison bringing you information on shore friendly living and gardening from the Master Gardeners and Virginia Cooperative Extension. Today we will be sharing some information on fall armyworm provided by Dr. Mike Goatley Jr., Dr. Tom Kuhar, and Dr. Alejandro Del Pozo, Extension Specialists from Virginia Tech.

There are several caterpillars that attack lawns and ornamentals in Virginia over the primary growing season, and there is a distinction between the fall armyworm and the “common” armyworm. The common armyworm is found pretty much anywhere east of the Rocky Mountains and its cold tolerance allows this insect to persist essentially year-round in Virginia. Fall armyworm is a tropical moth native to warm climate areas of the western hemisphere. It cannot successfully overwinter in Virginia. However, fall armyworm moths are strong fliers, and populations can show up throughout the eastern United States in the late summer and fall months, sometimes in very high populations like we saw most recently in 2018 and again in 2021 in Virginia. Female fall armyworm moths can lay up to 10 egg masses (each with 100 - 200 eggs). So, huge densities of armyworms can build up from just a few egg laying moths in a field. This can completely destroy lawns.

As its name implies, the fall armyworm is pretty predictable in terms of the timing of its appearance. Although the levels of pressure from this pest varies from year to year, it is anticipated that fall armyworm pressure peaks from mid-August to mid-September. Damage can be quick and severe when worms are present in large numbers, so having a control plan is often warranted. If damage is minimal, it is likely that you will have full recovery of the turfgrass and in most cases applications of insecticides are not warranted.

Insecticides recommended for control include most pyrethroids. Please note that control of large larvae is sometimes difficult with any insecticide.

The fall armyworm is a fairly easy pest to control. its appearance is quite predictable and very often does not require insecticide applications on your turfgrasses. However, when present in large numbers and actively feeding, the damage to the turfgrass can be severe, so be prepared to identify and treat this pest when needed.

For answers to your other Gardening questions or recommendations on how to control fall armyworm in your turf or pasture grasses, call your local Accomack or Northampton County Extension Office. Here on the Shore call either 678-7946 or 787-1361

<https://resources.ext.vt.edu/contentdetail?contentid=3267&contentname=Managing%20Fall%20Armyworms%20on%20Lawns&fbclid=IwAR3LD0hYlSHeb6FD8JMsOS0EwWqN9t-OLMpvqpzCJed5-LSwA-o5Z-ya0rc>