

Hawaiian beet webworm returns

IPM personnel, Tonia Broen and Joe Ingerson-Mahar have found heavy populations of Hawaiian beet webworm moths in 3 beet fields in East Vineland (Cumberland and Atlantic Counties) in addition to a baby spinach field and field of fenugreek in the Franklinville area (Gloucester County). Another field of mixed greens in the Princeton area (Mercer County) was found by Kris Holmstrom to have a sizeable population of HBWW adults in the weedy borders. The fenugreek was the most heavily infested of all the fields with two to three times the number of moths that the other fields had. When discovered, there was no sign of larval feeding.

Damage comes from both chewing holes in leaves (0 tolerance in baby spinach) and holes and webbing for all the greens, especially bad for processing spinach. Primary hosts are beets, chard, spinach, and edible amaranth. HBWW does feed on weeds including pigweeds, lambsquarters, and purslane. It takes about 4 days for eggs to hatch and 9-13 days for larvae to mature.

Several years ago, this pest appeared in October, causing extreme injury to spinach, beet and chard plantings before its presence was discovered. At this time, all growers from the central counties on south should check fields of known hosts for the presence of HBWW feeding. If large moth populations are found in weedy areas adjacent to host crops, it may be prudent to treat the fields in advance of obvious injury.

Coragen is one of two insecticides registered for use in New Jersey specifically for HBWW. The other is a generic. Intrepid (an insect growth regulator) is registered for garden webworm.



Hawaiian beet webworm larva (left) and adults (right)