

Old World Bollworm Survey in Progress

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) and your State or Territorial government need your help to track and prevent the spread of an invasive pest called the old world bollworm (*Helicoverpa armigera*). The traps we are placing on or near host plants in your area are part of an important survey for adult bollworm moths. Please do not move the traps and, if asked, please allow us to place traps on your private property.

Old world bollworm is a significant threat for agricultural industries. It attacks a wide range of high-value crops and other plants, including corn, cotton, small grains, soybeans, peppers, and tomatoes, just to name a few. This pest was found in Puerto Rico in 2014. If old world bollworm were to spread into the continental United States, it could seriously harm U.S. agricultural production, the environment, and our economy.

To fight this threat, USDA is partnering with State departments of agriculture to carry out old world bollworm surveys in Puerto Rico and throughout the United States. Our goal is to find new infestations early—before populations can establish, multiply, and spread. Your cooperation in these efforts is essential to conduct a full and complete survey and to help stop the spread of this unwanted pest.



Old world bollworm trap (USDA-APHIS, Plant Protection and Quarantine)



Pupa (P. Mazzei, Bugwood.org)



Adult male (USDA-APHIS, Plant Protection and Quarantine)



Larva (Merle Shepard, Gerald R. Carner, and P.A.C Ooi, *Insects and Their Natural Enemies Associated with Vegetables and Soybean in Southeast Asia*, Bugwood.org)



Adult female (Gyorgy Csoka, Hungary Forest Research Institute, Bugwood.org)



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Q. Is the old world bollworm a serious pest?

A. Yes. The old world bollworm is a serious pest and a major threat to U.S. agriculture. It has a wide host range, including many high-value crops, and it is capable of spreading quickly. Old world bollworm moths (adults) can fly up to 6 miles in search of host material and can be carried even longer distances by wind.

Q. Where should I look for this pest?

A. Look for old world bollworm adults, larvae, or signs of damage on host plants. Damage occurs when the larvae feed on host plant leaves or bore into the host's flowers and fruit and feed within the plant. In some cases, you may need to cut open the fruit to detect the pest.

Q. I found an insect that looks like the old world bollworm. What should I do?

A. Contact your local Extension office (www.nifa.usda.gov/Extension) or State agriculture department (www.nationalplantboard.org/member) as soon as possible. A qualified entomologist must dissect the insect or use DNA analysis to accurately identify old world bollworm. It is similar to many species of cutworms and to the corn earworm (*Helicoverpa zea*)—a major pest in the United States. Based on looks alone, it's impossible to tell them apart.

Q. What do old world bollworm traps look like, and how do they work?

A. The trap is a white plastic bucket with a snap-on yellow middle cap and a green lid. The trap is about 8 inches tall and is either secured to a freestanding pole in the field or hung from the ceiling in greenhouses. The traps are baited with a lure that attracts the male moth. Once the male moth enters a trap, it falls into the bucket and is killed by a small insecticidal strip.

Q. Are the old world bollworm traps safe?

A. The traps pose no risk to people, pets, or wildlife.

Q. How can I support the old world bollworm survey?

A. Talk to your family and friends about the survey and why it's important. The traps are placed in or near fields of host plants—please do not move the traps. If you see one on the ground, call the phone number on the green lid (or the number listed in the box below) to report it. Also, if asked, please allow survey personnel to place traps on your private property. We need your cooperation to help detect old world bollworm and keep it from spreading.

Q. Where can I get more information about old world bollworm?

A. You can learn more about this pest at HungryPests.com. If you have questions about the survey or wish to report a fallen trap, call the number listed below, or contact your State agriculture department (www.nationalplantboard.org/member) or nearest USDA office (www.aphis.usda.gov/planthealth/sphd).