

SEEDCORN MAGGOT *Diptera: Anthomyiidae Hylemya platura*

DESCRIPTION

Adults are about 5 mm long with a gray body and black legs. Mature **larvae** are white and about 6 mm long.

ECONOMIC IMPORTANCE

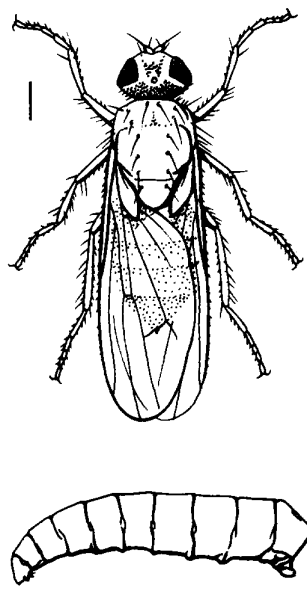
The seedcorn maggot is frequently a serious pest on beans, corn, peas, cucumber, and other plants that have large seeds. This pest is particularly serious during cold, wet springs when germination and growth are slow. Maggots attack seeds and seedlings and may cause the plant stand to be extremely spotty. A heavy infestation may cause complete crop failure. This pest also is associated with a bacterium which causes black-leg of potato.

DISTRIBUTION AND LIFE HISTORY

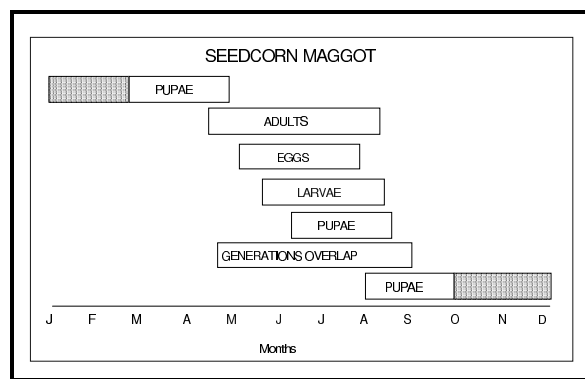
Seedcorn maggot occurs throughout the United States and southern Canada. The insect overwinters as a larva or pupa in the soil. Adults emerge in early May and lay eggs just beneath the soil surface near decaying vegetable matter such as manure or other humus. The eggs hatch in about seven days, and the newly emerged maggots immediately begin feeding on any suitable food. This generation often attacks seeds of beans and corn. Larvae mature in about three weeks, pupate in the soil, and emerge as adults during late June and early July. Adults lay eggs as before and larvae feed to maturity and pupate in August to form the overwintering stage. There may be as many as five generations each year in some areas of the northwest.

MANAGEMENT AND CONTROL

Cultural practices are generally effective against this pest; 1) plant susceptible crops in well-drained, warm soil, 2) use well-rotted rather than fresh manure or humus and plow it down in the fall, 3) delay planting until conditions of temperature and moisture are suitable for rapid germination and growth, 4) plant seed as shallow as possible for rapid germination, and 5) avoid using large amounts of organic matter since it favors maggot infestations by attracting adults. Seed treatment is the most commonly used method to reduce the seriousness of this pest.



(after USDA Bull. 732)



Entomophagus fungi are important natural control agents of adults in some areas of the northwest. See the Pacific Northwest Insect Control Handbook for a list of registered insecticides to control this pest on specific crops.