



# Black Cutworm

› **Scientific Name:** *Agrotis* spp.

› **Order:** Lepidoptera

› **Susceptible Species**

- Mostly a pest of bentgrass golf greens though also occurs in other turfgrass situations where damage may be less obvious.

› **Description**

- **Immature/larval stage:** Smooth bodied, dark coloured caterpillar with longitudinal lines and brown to black spots on back and sides.
- **Mature/adult stage:** A brown moth with a wing span up to 55mm. Fore-wings are purple brown with black markings and hind-wings are grey with brown markings.

› **Biology and Lifecycle**

- Adult moths lay their eggs in clusters in turfgrass at night.
- Some species produce enough generations that adult moths are present throughout the year.
- Cutworm larvae usually feed during the night and take shelter during the day.
- These insects typically cut off young plants at the crown level and pull them into a burrow before feeding.
- Cutworms have two generations per year and overwinter as pupae.

› **Damage**

- Damage appears in low-cut turf when the caterpillar emerges from their subterranean burrow and feeds on the turf plants surrounding the burrow entrance.
- This results in a bald patch of turf surrounding the burrow, usually in patches about the size of a golf ball and often resembling a pitch mark.
- In plague proportions these patches can coalesce to destroy large areas of turf.

› **Management Tips**

- Cutworm can take advantage of open core holes following renovation activities, taking up residence and using the core hole as its burrow. Ensure prompt recovery following renovation and consider insecticide applications as a precautionary measure.

Larvae



Adult



Damage



- Mowing with a catcher and disposing of clippings away from susceptible turf areas will ensure eggs are removed from the turf surface the following morning after being laid.