



Sod Webworm

› **Scientific Name:** *Herpetogramma licarsisalis*

› **Order:** Lepidoptera

› **Susceptible Species**

- Most turfgrass species, though more commonly warm season turfgrasses.

› **Description**

- **Immature/larval stage:** Relatively thick caterpillar up to 25mm long, pale green-brown body with dark spots.
- **Mature/adult stage:** Slender bodied moth with a wingspan of 2.5cm. Wings are grey with black spots and transverse dark wavy lines.

› **Biology and Lifecycle**

- Female sod webworms moths drop their non adhesive eggs onto turf while flying at night. The eggs fall into the thatch and hatch within 10 days, depending on temperature.
- Peak hatching occurs in early summer and continues throughout the summer months.
- The eggs tend to be oval or elliptical in shape with longitudinal ridges on the surface than run from pole to pole.
- Upon hatching most larvae burrow into the thatch and conceal themselves with particles or debris. These larvae remain concealed during the day and wander out at night to feed.
- By late spring or early summer the young adult moths emerge and fly just above the turf. These moths are especially active at dusk.
- The entire lifecycle generally takes about 6 weeks, and in most regions this pest has 2-3 generations per year.

› **Damage**

- Young larvae feed on tender leaves and stems, causing physical injury and opening areas of plant tissue for infection.
- Later instar larvae will often remove grass blades and drag them into their tunnels for feeding.
- Damage first appears as small brown patches, often mistaken for fungal disease. Upon close inspection the leaf margins may be ragged where young larvae have been feeding.



Larvae



Adult



Damage

› **Management Tips**

- Maintain rapid turf growth and recovery. Warm season grasses can outgrow spring and early summer damage.
- The worst damage occurs as turfgrass growth slows towards the end of the season and recovery is compromised.