

Identifying Blacklight Trap Catches in the Upper Midwest

Field ID Keys

- Empty the trap frequently, preferably every other day
- Examine fresh specimens, identifying characteristics become obscure with age
- Use forewing markings to distinguish between species, hind wings to reinforce your decisions
- Ignore moths smaller in size than the diamondback moth (wingspan < 1 inch), they are not economically important in field and vegetable crops
- Ignore larger hawk moths, beetles (wingspan > 3 inches), and other night-flying insects that are attracted to the light



ECB Male

Forewing

Hindwing



ECB Female

European Corn Borer (*Ostrinia nubilalis*)

Wingspan = 1 inch

Forewing

- females are straw-colored with wavy lines along the outer wing margin
- females have a dot and dash visible on fresh specimens (green arrows)
- males are similar to the female, but the color is much darker
- males are grayish-brown with yellowish wavy lines along the outer wing margins that are more pronounced than on the females

Hindwing

- Yellowish with faint brown lines on both males and females

Fall Armyworm (*Spodoptera frugiperda*)



Male



Female

Wingspan = 1.5 inches

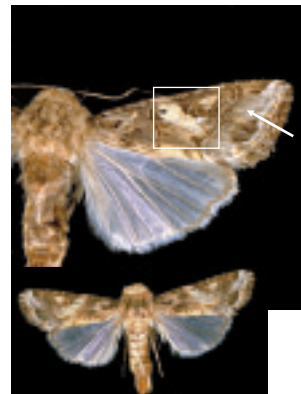
Forewing

- males are mottled gray to brown with obscure lines and spots throughout the wings
- females are similar in appearance with pinkish or white wing margins

Hindwing

- Grayish white

Yellow-striped Armyworm (*Spodoptera ornithogalli*)



Wingspan = 1.25-1.75 inches

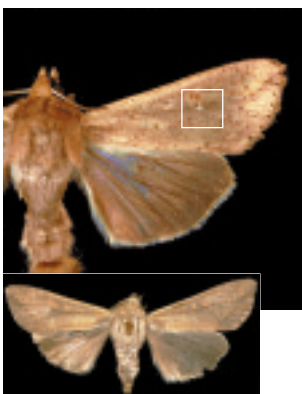
Forewing

- white spot forks to form a sideways Y (white box)
- grayish blue shading (white arrow)

Hindwing:

- Translucent grayish-white

True Armyworm (*Pseudaletia unipunctata*)



Wingspan = 1.5 inches

Forewing

- Sand-colored with numerous black dots
- A single white dot in the center of each forewing on fresh specimens (white box)

Hindwing

- grayish to brown with a tan fringe
- dark markings on hindwings distinguish the true armyworms from fall and yellow-striped armyworms

Corn Earworm (*Helicoverpa zea*)



Wingspan = 1.5 inches

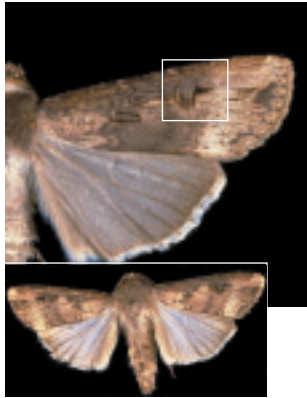
Forewing

- a robust moth with a large, hairy upper body. Wings are yellowish tan with irregular reddish brown to olive green or gray markings.
- a light colored, golden band near the wing margins

Hindwing

- light-colored with a dark tan to brown border

Black Cutworm (*Agrotis ipsilon*)



Wingspan = 1.25 - 2 inches

Forewing

- mottled dark brown to gray with distinctive dark markings
- small black "dagger" (white box)

Hindwing:

- light grayish brown with darker veins on outer wing margins

Variegated Cutworm (*Peridrama saucia*)



Wingspan = 1.5 - 2 inches

Forewing

- brown to reddish-brown
- a kidney-shaped spot is usually distinguishable on fresh specimens (white box)

Hindwing

- grayish white with a darker-colored outer margin

Spotted Cutworm (*Xestia dolosa*)



Wingspan = 1.5 - 1.75 inches

Forewing

- brownish gray
- distinct beige and black markings (white box)

Hindwing

- whitish gray

Dingy Cutworm (*Feltia jaculifera*)



Wingspan = 1 - 1.5 inches

Forewing

- gray with black and white mottled areas

Hindwing

- white to gray
- darker shading at outer wing margin

Stalk Borer (*Papaipema nebris*)



Wingspan = 1.25 inches

Forewing

- dark gray to brown
- numerous white dots may or may not be visible (white box)
- a white line is visible and runs from front to back of the forewing, separating the white dots from the outer portion of the wing

Hindwing

- uniform gray to light brown

Hop Vine Borer (*Hydraecia immanis*)



Wingspan = 1.5 - 2 inches

Forewing

- mottled pinkish brown color
- line running from front to back (white box)

Hindwing

- Mottled and straw-colored

Cabbage Looper (*Trichoplusia ni*)



Wingspan = 1.5 inches

Forewing

- mottled, grayish-brown forewings with two separate, very distinct, silvery-white spots (white box)
- The shape of these spots is useful in distinguishing the cabbage looper from other adult loopers

Hindwing

- grayish brown with darker shading along the outer margin

Diamondback Moth (*Plutella xylostella*)



Wingspan = 0.5 - 1 inch

Forewing

- in general, diamondback moths are smaller than the other economically-important moths
- Coloration is dark gray or brown with irregular white markings which form a pattern of three white diamonds when wings are folded together at rest

Hindwing

- Gray

(Photo courtesy of J. A. Wyman)