



PestFacts WA

Issue: 11
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Brown pasture looper activity update

- Moora
- Badgingarra
- Dandaragan
- Northam
- Katanning
- Gnowangerup



Image 1: Brown pasture looper caterpillar. Photo courtesy of: Tom McInerney (Great Southern Ag / Synergy Consulting).

Brown pasture loopers have become noticeable in some crops in the midwest, central and southern grainbelt in recent weeks. These caterpillars can cause minor damage to young seedling crops near pasture and unsprayed green bridge. The caterpillars are most

damaging to crops and pasture when they are larger than 20 mm and they transfer from autumn weeds to newly emerged seedlings.

Tom McInerney (Great Southern Ag/Synergy Consulting) has found a large number of brown pasture looper caterpillars defoliating capeweed plants at Gnowangerup.

Patchy crop damage caused by brown pasture looper caterpillars was reported in a seedling barley crop at Katanning by James Bee (Elders). Minor crop damage was also reported by Helen Lethlean (FarmCo Moora) in barley, wheat, canola and lupin crops adjacent to pasture crops near Badgingarra and Dandaragan.

Brown pasture loopers have also recently been reported in low numbers in clover pasture at Moora by Niamh Delaney (Nutrien Ag Solutions), and in low numbers on canola seedlings at Northam by Amber Balfour-Cunningham, Research Scientist (Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development).

Identification

Brown pasture looper caterpillars are slender grey or brown with distinctive cream or yellow stripes that appear after they reach 10 mm in length. Young caterpillars can be seen on plant leaves during the day, they use their single pair of abdominal prolegs and one pair of anal prolegs to move with a characteristic looping motion. When the caterpillars reach full size at 30 mm long, they cease the looping motion.

Caterpillar species vary in their behaviour and their preference for weed and crop types so correct identification is important to ensure if insecticide spray applications are necessary.

Growers and consultants can use the [PestFacts WA Reporter app](#) to request or confirm identification of caterpillars of other crop pests.

Management of brown pasture loopers and considering beneficials

Growers are advised to monitor their paddocks for brown pasture looper activity, especially the edge of crops adjacent to pasture or crops seeded into paddocks with a green bridge. Applications of insecticide sprays are advised only if loopers are present and feeding on the crop.

If numbers warrant spraying then growers and consultants can refer to DPIRD's [2024 autumn winter insecticide guide](#).

For a list of insecticides with their toxicity to beneficial insects, refer to Cesar Australia's [Beneficials Chemical Toxicity Table](#).

Growers should consider insecticide options that are soft on predator insects if spraying.

For more information on beneficials refer to DPIRD's [Know what beneficials look like in your crop page](#).

More information

For more information refer to DPIRD's [Diagnosing brown pasture looper page](#).

For more information contact DPIRD research scientists Svetlana Micic in Albany on +61 (0)8 9892 859, Andrew Phillips in Geraldton on +61 8 9956 8567 or Dusty Severtson in Northam on +61 8 9690 2160.

Article author: Bec Severtson (DPIRD Northam).

Native budworm caterpillars are active

- Cadoux
- Dalwallinu
- Alma
- Bolgart
- York
- Cuballing



Image 2: A native budworm caterpillar on a lupin plant. Photo courtesy of: David Stead (Anasazi Agronomy).

David Stead (Anasazi Agronomy) has found high numbers of native budworm caterpillars in a lupin crop near Cadoux. While observing the numbers in the crop, David found between 6 to 20 grubs at each location where he stopped and counted caterpillars visible on the lupin plants. The crop will be sprayed to control the caterpillars.

An agronomist sweep netted a lupin crop near Dalwallinu and found very low levels of small budworm caterpillars.

DPIRD officers who regularly monitor canola crops at several locations across the WA grainbelt have found low numbers (average of less than 1 per 10 sweeps) of budworm caterpillars at Alma, Bolgart and York.

Large native budworm caterpillars have also been found in a faba bean crop at Cuballing indicating that the initial budworm moth migrations would have occurred very early this year, probably during June.

The presence of budworm caterpillars in crops may not be immediately obvious, as there may be very little leaf feeding damage due to the caterpillars' preference for feeding on developing buds. The only way to be sure of the possible presence of budworm caterpillars is to sweep net the crop at multiple locations.

The levels of budworm caterpillars found at Cadoux at this time of year could result in developing buds and flowers being stripped from plants unless numbers are controlled. Field pea, faba bean, lentil, lupin and chickpea are particularly susceptible crops and would struggle to compensate for the level of bud/flower removal the caterpillars could cause over time unless crops are being monitored for their presence.

Moth trapping update

Variable numbers of budworm moths have been caught in surveillance traps over the last few weeks. The larger captures include Nangetty (106 moths), Nabawa (45), Southern Cross (34), Carnamah (27 moths), Moonyoonooka (27), West Casuarinas (18), Maya (17) Dalwallinu (16) and Ogilvie (16).

A mapped view of all recent native budworm trap captures is available at Cesar Australia's [MothTrapVisWA](#) page. Viewers need to select the desired trapping date range.

Management

Pesticide options for the control of native budworm can be found in [DPIRD's 2024 Winter Spring Insecticide Guide](#).

Further information

Detailed information on this pest can be found at the department's [Native budworm spraying threshold](#) factsheet.

To read about prior native budworm activity this season refer to the 2024 PestFacts WA Issue 5 article [Native budworm moth flights have started](#).

For more information contact Technical Officer [Alan Lord](#) in Perth on +61 (0)409 689 468.

Article author: Alan Lord (DPIRD South Perth).

Sclerotinia stem rot update

- Chapman Valley
- Nabawa
- Woorree
- Miling
- Northam
- Kojonup
- Albany
- Gibson



Image 3: Sclerotinia apothecia. Photo courtesy of: Ciara Beard (DPIRD).

Apothecia have recently been observed in DPIRD sclerote depots at Chapman Valley, Woorree, Miling, Northam, Kojonup, Albany and Gibson.

A consultant has also reported finding apothecia in cereal crops on canola stubbles and in canola crops near Nabawa and Geraldton.

These apothecia reports are a warning that the moist weather in recent weeks has suited the commencement of the sclerotinia disease lifecycle in those areas. Sclerotinia spores have been detected in DPIRD passive spore traps in the Albany port zone.

Growers in areas with a history of sclerotinia are reminded to monitor their lupin and canola crops to assess the risk of sclerotinia stem rot developing, when crops are close to or at flowering, especially if future weather conditions are conducive (regular rainfall and high humidity with temperatures less than 25°C).

Crops that reach canopy closure early in the season and have dense canopies are at higher risk of developing sclerotinia due to canopy humidity favouring the disease. For more information, refer to the GRDC [Lupin sclerotinia disease risk assessment guide](#) fact sheet.

Two decision support tools are available for canola growers to use during flowering. The tools can help determine the likely economic returns from applying fungicide during early to mid-flowering for the control of sclerotinia stem rot and blackleg upper canopy infection, which can also occur during early flowering. For more information, refer to DPIRD's [SclerotiniaCM decision support tool](#) or DPIRD's [UCI BlacklegCM decision support tool](#).

Growers and consultants are encouraged to use the [PestFacts WA Reporter app](#) to report any apothecia finds or disease observations as the season progresses.

Further information

Further information on sclerotinia symptoms, fungicide management and identification of canola bloom stages was covered in a previous article in 2024 PestFacts WA Issue 9 Sclerotinia disease in progress in WA.

For more information on sclerotinia in canola contact plant pathologists Andrea Hills, Esperance on +61 (0)8 9083 1144, Ciara Beard, Geraldton on +61 (0)8 9956 8504 or Jean Galloway, Northam +61 (0)8 9690 2172.

For more information on sclerotinia in lupins contact plant pathologists Ciara Beard, Geraldton on +61 (0)8 9956 8504 or Geoff Thomas, Perth on +61 (0)428 947 287.

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Article input: Jean Galloway (DPIRD Northam), Kithsiri Jayasena (DPIRD Albany) and Andrea Hills (DPIRD Esperance).

PestFacts WA Reporter app

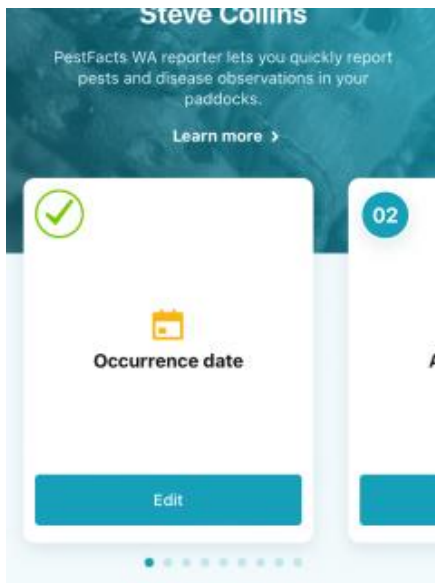


Growers and consultants are invited to download and use the PestFacts WA Reporter app to make quick reports, or request identifications, of insects and plant diseases from broadacre crop and pasture paddocks anywhere in the WA grainbelt.

The PestFacts WA service, which includes the PestFacts WA newsletter and map, relies on your input and observations to alert the WA grains industry of what pests and plant diseases are a threat to WA broadacre crops and pastures.

It is no problem if you are out of mobile range, the app will send your report as soon as it gets a connection.

To download this app visit the [Apple app store](#) and [Google play store](#).



App features

- Easy registration.

After you have downloaded the app, you just have to enter your name, email address and phone number in the onboarding screens and you are all set to go. Once you have registered these onboarding screens will no longer appear when you open the app in the future.

- Streamlined tiles to select inputs.

Users can scroll across input tiles to select pest or disease occurrence details. Compulsory selections that need to be entered are; occurrence date, location, host plant and disorder. Any extra details, such as host variety, host growth stage and severity of problem, are welcomed but not compulsory to submit a report.

- Attach up to three photos to request an identification or confirm your diagnosis.

You have the option of taking photos in the app or attaching photos from your phone's gallery. Submitting clear photos, and close up shots of insect or disease features, will assist our experts with making a diagnosis.

- Use the category options to save time.

Rather than scrolling through long lists use the category option down the bottom of the host plant or disorder list pages to filter your selections.

Click 'ID uncertain' if you need an expert to identify the disorder.

- Share with colleagues.

If you think your friends or colleagues would benefit from this app, click the share button on the top right hand side of the app and you can send them the app store link directly.

- Easier sharing of occurrence location.

Knowing the location of the disorder occurrence is important so the PestFacts WA team can alert the WA grains industry of where a pest or plant disease has been reported. This is even easier in the new app as you can enable your phone GPS if reporting directly from the paddock, or you can describe the location in the comments section if reporting from a different location.

- Edit historical reports to save time.

If you are reporting the same pest or disease multiple times go into your Report History, select a relevant past report and click "Copy report". You can then quickly make any updates as needed before reviewing and submitting. This will save you time as you do not have to create a whole new report.

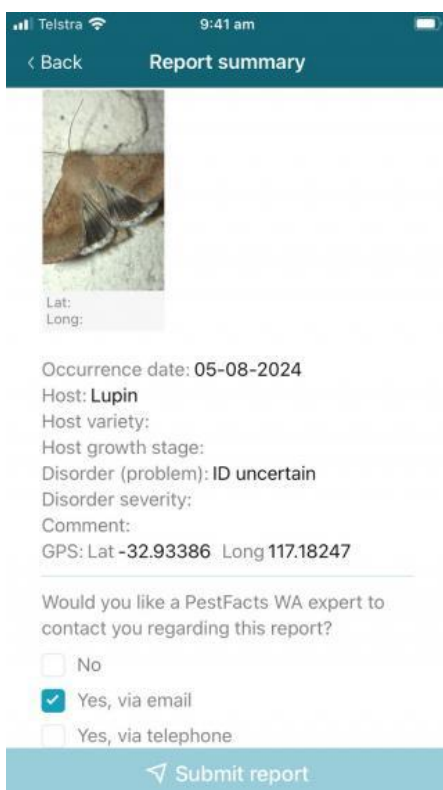
- Ability to review report summary before submitting.

After you have selected your inputs click "View and submit report". If you have not entered all the compulsory selections, you will not be able to click on this button. In the report summary you can check your inputs, and if you see any errors, just go back and edit.

In the summary page, you can select if you need a DPIRD expert to contact you, or not, to discuss your report or identification request.

If you do not want your name put against this report, or published in the PestFacts WA e-newsletter, you can request to stay anonymous.

Before you can submit your report, users also need to declare they are the owner of any photographs and give their consent for the PestFacts WA team to publish their name (unless they have chosen to remain anonymous), photograph and general location in publications.



Telstra 9:41 am

< Back Report summary

Lat:
Long:

Occurrence date: 05-08-2024
Host: **Lupin**
Host variety:
Host growth stage:
Disorder (problem): ID uncertain
Disorder severity:
Comment:
GPS: Lat -32.93386 Long 117.18247

Would you like a PestFacts WA expert to contact you regarding this report?

☐ No
☒ Yes, via email
☐ Yes, via telephone

Submit report

Further information

For more information refer to DPIRD's [PestFacts WA Reporter app](#) page and [Explainer video](#).

For more information contact [Steve Collins](#), Senior Application Developer in Perth on +61 (0)8 9368 3436.

Article authors: Cindy Webster (DPIRD Narrogin) and Steve Collins (DPIRD Perth).

Important Disclaimer

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