

## GLASSY CUTWORM *Lepidoptera: Noctuidae Cymodes devastator*

### DESCRIPTION

**Larvae** are about 3 cm long when mature. The head is reddish-brown. The body is unpigmented, dirty white to greenish, with a translucent, glassy appearance.



Glassy cutworm larva

### ECONOMIC IMPORTANCE

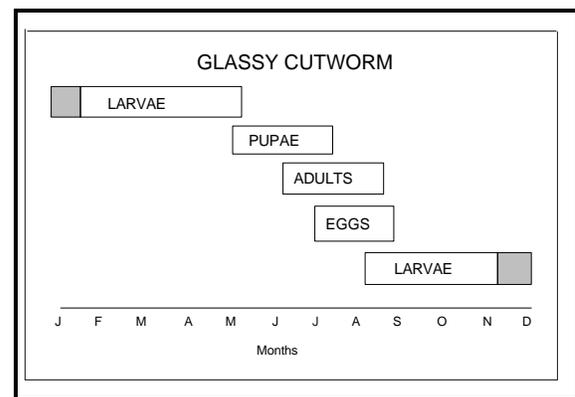
Larvae feed underground on grass crowns and roots which kills plants directly or severely stunts them. Damage frequently occurs in the fall and may continue through the winter into April, May, and June. Larvae also feed on cereals and corn and in heavy infestations can reduce the stand and yields. Larvae also may be found in other crops, such as mint and alfalfa, when the fields are infested with grassy weeds.



Glassy cutworm adult

### DISTRIBUTION AND LIFE HISTORY

This cutworm is widely distributed in the northwest, particularly west of the Cascade Mountains. *Protagrotis obscura*, a related noctuid, may be a more serious pest on grasses in eastern Oregon, Washington, and Idaho than the glassy cutworm. The glassy cutworm overwinters in the crowns of grass as small larvae (larvae may continue feeding during the winter months when temperatures are mild). In the fall, when the larvae of the glassy cutworm are small, they may be difficult to distinguish from crambid larvae. Larvae mature in the spring and pupate in the soil. Adults begin emerging in late June, July, and August, mate, and lay eggs on the soil surface near the crowns of grass hosts. Eggs hatch in about 10 days and larvae begin feeding on the crowns. These larvae develop partially and form the overwintering stage. There is one generation each year.



### MANAGEMENT AND CONTROL

Cutworms and armyworms are frequently attacked by naturally occurring parasites, but the level of control varies from year to year and from location to location. Burning grass fields in the fall after harvest may help reduce larval populations, although the major benefits from burning may be the removal of crop residues which increases exposure of larvae to harsh winter conditions. The use of insecticides in the fall may be necessary to control large populations

of this cutworm. A fall application of an insecticide has the following advantages: 1) larvae are still small and more susceptible to control, 2) feeding injury is minor compared to spring feeding damage, 3) excessive plant residues have been removed by burning and insecticide penetration is less impaired, and 4) fall rains may help carry the insecticide down into the crown where larvae are feeding. See the Pacific Northwest Insect Control Handbook for a list of registered insecticides to control this pest.

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