

Control of Budworms, Earworms and Other Insects Attacking Sweet Corn and Green Corn in Florida

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Introduction

Sweet corn is quickly taking its place in the agriculture of Florida. It is an excellent crop to grow following fall crops or for alternate-year cropping with other vegetables. The limiting factors have been a lack of good varieties adaptable to Florida conditions and difficulties encountered in the control of earworms in the ears of corn.

Damage to the ears is caused mainly by the larvae of two principal pests—the corn earworm and the fall armyworm. The amount of damage sustained is influenced by (1) the density of insect population, (2) the portion of the ear attacked, (3) the natural resistance of the corn variety grown and (4) various preventive measures which can be used. The time of year influences the density of the insect population.

Northern markets for Florida sweet corn are largely undeveloped, but are being developed rapidly. There has been a prejudice against short-eared yellow-kernel sweet corn in Southern markets, probably because most of the people in this section prefer a large, long-eared white-kernel corn. Some of this prejudice no doubt has been brought about by the fact that sweet corn is so susceptible to damage from corn earworm, fall armyworm and other larvae. Also, even when informed of control measures that will allow them to produce and market a worm-free ear of sweet corn, growers object to a variety such as Golden Cross Bantam because the stalks may be short and the ears close to the ground, thus making harvest most laborious.

However, sweet corn can be grown economically in Florida. A comprehensive comparison of varieties adapted to Florida is being made for early publication elsewhere.

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