

Issue 11 – July 31, 2026

Manitoba Crop Pest Update



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Summary

Insects: Bertha armyworm and soybean aphids are two of the insects to currently be monitoring levels of.

Bertha armyworm larvae are progressing into their later larval stages in some areas; larvae can be easily found in some fields in the Southwest, but currently there are no reports of control. **Soybean aphids** are being found at high levels in isolated area of some soybean fields in the Central and Southwest regions, but there have been no reports yet of fields that on average were at the economic threshold.

Diseases: No major disease concerns were reported this week. **Glume blotch** was noted in some barley fields, while **Fusarium head blight (FHB)** and **bacterial leaf streak** continued to be observed in cereal crops. **Early symptoms of Verticillium stripe and Sclerotinia stem rot** were present in canola, with Verticillium being particularly prevalent even at early growth stages. Assessing Verticillium severity in the field remains challenging, as infected plants may “appear” green and healthy externally despite **clear vascular discoloration, water-soaking and microsclerotia present within stem cross-sections**. In soybean, **bacterial blight** and **Septoria brown spot** were prevalent in most fields but generally occurred at low levels and are not expected to have a significant impact on yield.

Entomology

Midge larvae in canola pods?

If opening canola pods to try to look for cabbage seedpod weevil damage, other insects may occasionally be inside. There have been instances where larvae of canola flower midge, *Contarinia brassicola*, have been found in canola pods. There is evidence suggesting that female canola flower midge may take advantage of feeding damage caused by other insects, like Lygus bugs and cabbage seedpod weevil, to lay eggs inside canola pods. Canola flower midge larvae do not appear to directly damage or feed on canola seeds when they are found inside canola pods, however.



Photo by Shanna Schroeder, New Era Ag Technologies

Scouting techniques and thresholds for bertha armyworm

Now is the time to be looking for larvae of bertha armyworm, or their feeding on plants, in canola and other host crops, such as quinoa, hemp and flax. It is important to monitor larval numbers in each field. Adjacent fields may have very different larval densities, depending upon how attractive the crop was when the moths were laying their eggs. Adjacent crops may also have different-sized larvae, depending on when the eggs were laid.



For accurate larval estimates in a crop, sample at least five locations a minimum of 50 metres apart, although sampling more locations will result in more accurate estimates. At each location:

- Mark out an area of one quarter of a metre square (50cm X 50cm). A 3-sided frame can be used to define the area to be sampled.
- Shake the plants growing within that area to dislodge any larvae remaining on the plants.
- Count the number of larvae in the 1/4 square metre area.

It is important to take your time while counting larvae. Carefully search the soil and leaf litter. The larvae may be hidden underneath clumps of soil, in cracks in the soil, or within curled leaves.

- Multiply the number counted by 4 to get the number per square metre. Use the average number of larvae at the sites surveyed within each field to determine if the economic threshold has been exceeded and an insecticide is necessary.

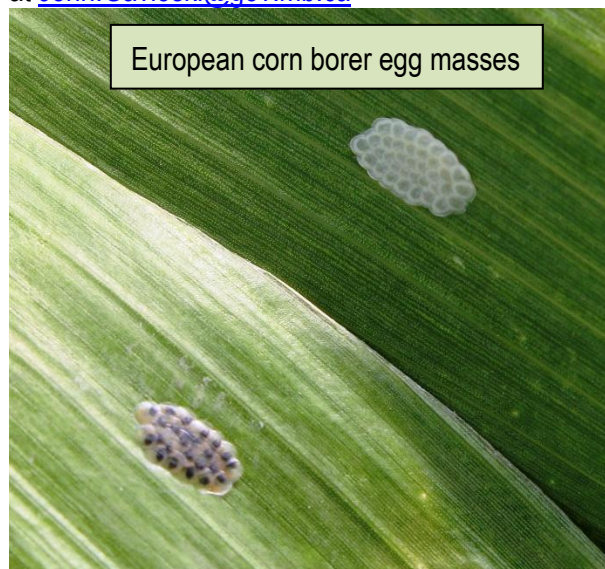
Economic thresholds in canola depend on the expected seed value and cost of control.

A table of thresholds for various control costs and seed values is in the Manitoba Agriculture factsheet on bertha armyworm at: <https://www.gov.mb.ca/agriculture/crops/insects/pubs/bertha-armyworm-factsheet.pdf>

At an expected seed value of \$16 a bushel, and control cost (insecticide and application) of about \$16 an acres, the threshold would be about 17 bertha armyworm per m².

Donate your Corn Borers to Science

We are once again looking for European corn borer egg masses or larvae for some research projects. If anyone is seeing a high level of egg masses or larvae, and doesn't mind some being collected, please contact John Gavloski at John.Gavloski@gov.mb.ca



Beneficial Insects

In some of the fields with aphids, agronomists and farmers have reported noticing lacewings, hover flies and lady beetles. Larvae and adults of these predaceous insects can currently be found, and some are noticing green lacewing eggs, which are quite noticeable because they are on a stalk. Minute pirate bugs and damsel bugs are quite evident in some fields as well currently.

Diseases

Veticiillium stripe in canola

Canola stems may “appear” green and healthy (left), but water soaking, grey discoloration with some microsclerotia are (middle and right) present in the cross section of crown area, caused by *Verticillium longisporium*. Photo Courtesy: Simon Huang, Manitoba Agriculture.



Sclerotinia stem rot in canola

As some canola fields are still flowering, leaf symptoms of Sclerotinia stem rot in canola showing soft, water-soaked spots, greyish-white lesions, likely starts where infected flower petals stick to the leaf.

Photo Courtesy: Simon Huang, Mnaitoba Agriculture.



Forecast

True Armyworm

Larvae of true armyworms, *Mythimna unipuncta*, can cause significant feeding injury to cereals and forage grasses when levels are abundant. Pheromone-baited traps, which attract the male moths, were established for a 12-week period from early-May until late-July to detect the arrival and levels of populations of armyworms. Traps were set up at 28 locations in Manitoba. Armyworms were caught in all 28 traps. The highest cumulative counts were in the Interlake region. Nine traps in the Interlake region have counts over 150, with a trap near Jaroslaw having a cumulative count of 594. Another four traps in the Interlake region have cumulative counts in the 99-147 moth range.

Armyworm larvae have been reported in late-June and July in some fields in the Northwest, Interlake, Eastern and Central regions. There have been some fields in the Northwest, Interlake and Eastern regions where high larval populations were noted and control was applied. Looking for evidence of defoliation and larvae of armyworms while scouting cereals and forage grasses is recommended.

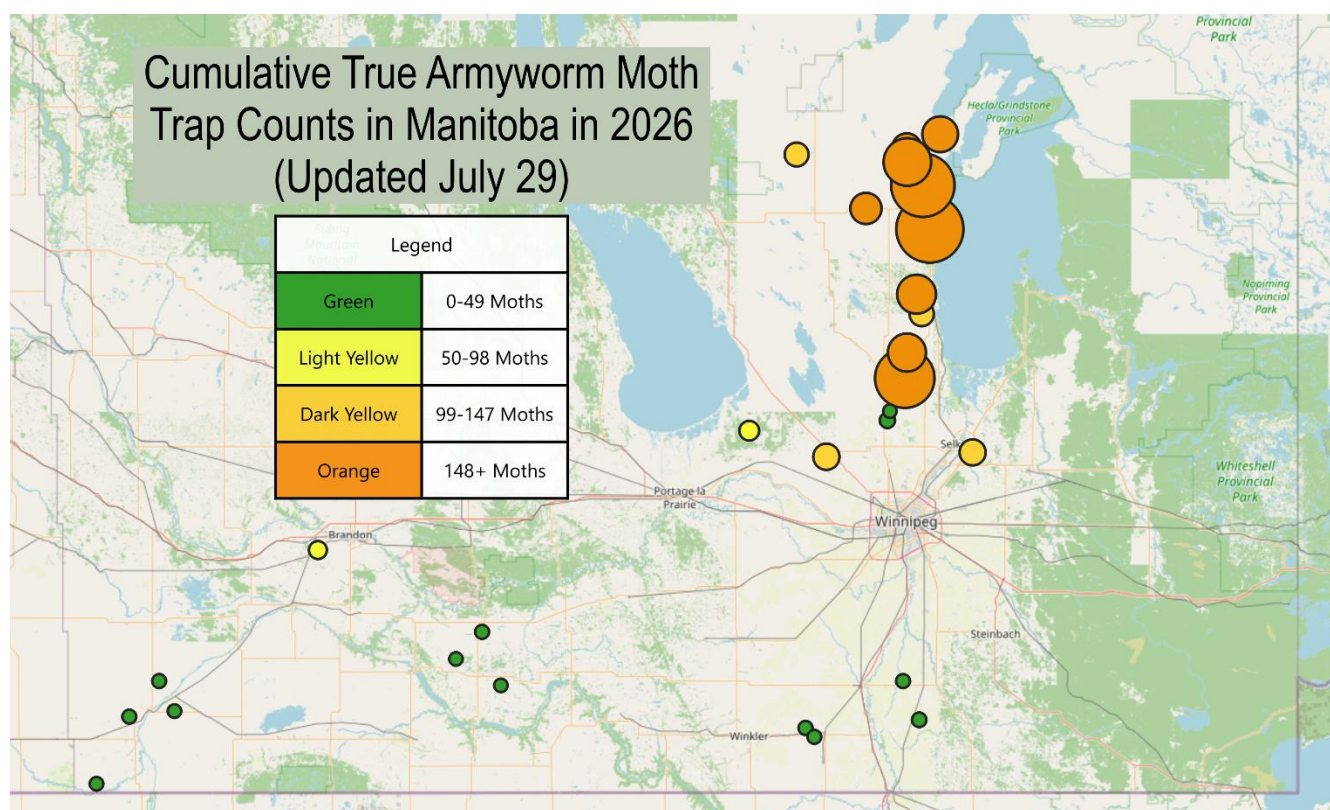


Table 1. Highest cumulative counts of true armyworm moths (*Mythimna unipuncta*) in pheromone-baited traps in Manitoba, as of July 29, 2026

Nearest Town	Region	Cumulative Count
Jaroslaw	Interlake	594
Riverton	Interlake	553
Teulon	Interlake	510
Shorncliffe	Interlake	378
Aspen Park	Interlake	283
Pleasant Home	Interlake	274

Washow Bay	Interlake	248
Framnes	Interlake	198
Shorncliffe	Interlake	179
Warren	Interlake	143

Bertha Armyworm

The population of adult moths of bertha armyworms were monitored using pheromone-baited traps during the flight and egg-laying period, from early-June through July. Bertha armyworm were found in 62 of the 64 traps. Cumulative counts remained in the low risk category in most traps, although seven traps have cumulative counts in the uncertain risk category. These include traps near Durban and Swan River in the Northwest region, Wawanesa and Brandon in the Southwest region, Morweena and Teulon in the Interlake region, and St. Joseph in the Central region. The highest cumulative trap count is 646 from a trap near Wawanesa in the Southwest region.

Larvae of bertha armyworm are being found in some fields. Scouting for larvae is encouraged. The later instar larvae are the most damaging stages.

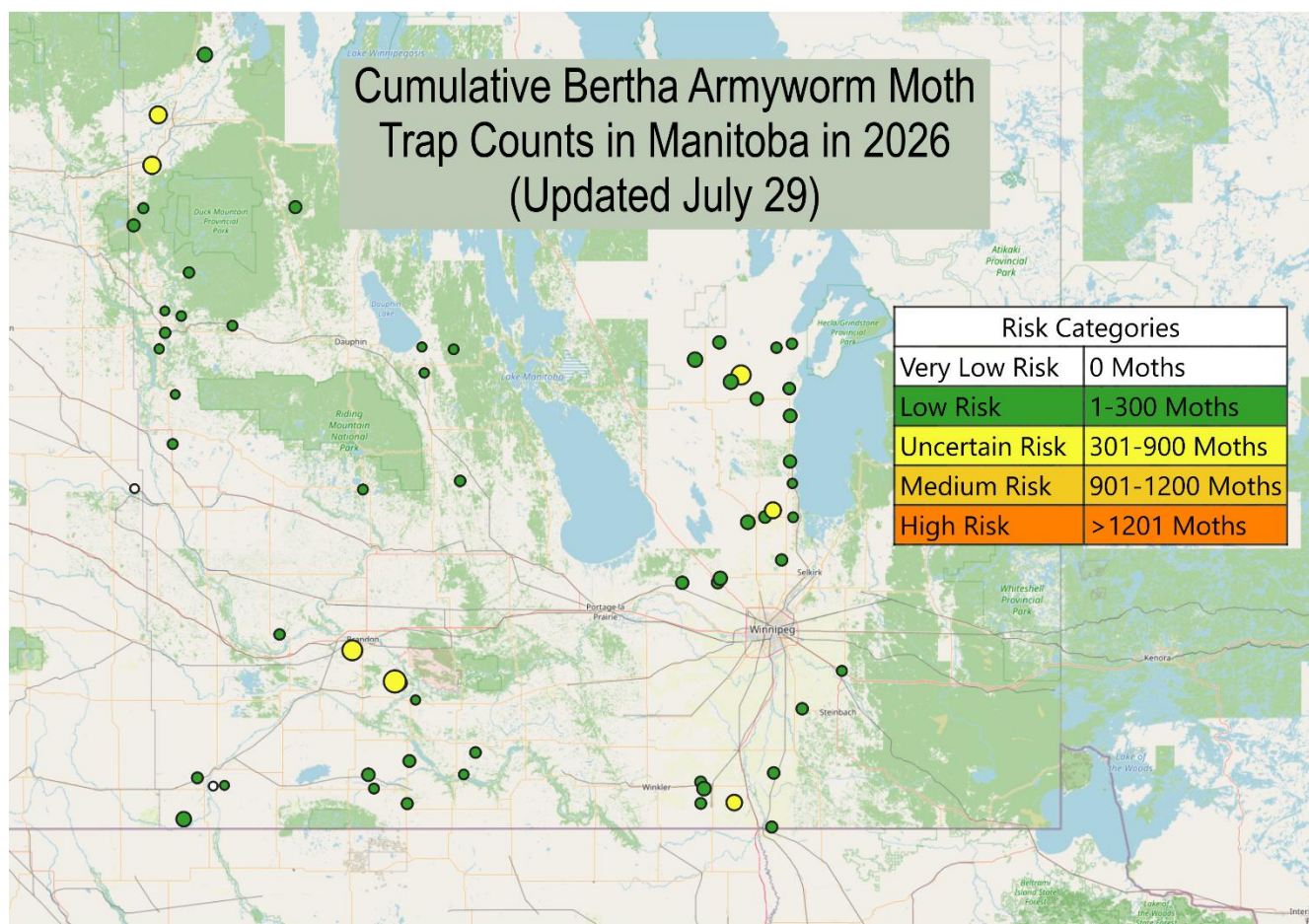


Table 2. Highest cumulative counts of bertha armyworm moths (*Mamestra configurata*) in pheromone-baited traps in Manitoba, as of July 29, 2026

Nearest Town	Region	Cumulative Count
Wawanesa	Southwest	646
Brandon	Southwest	537
Morweena	North Interlake	502
Durban	Northwest	415
Swan River	Northwest	404
Teulon	North Interlake	351
St. Joseph	Central	331
Lyleton	Southwest	284
Morweena	North Interlake	274
Fisher Branch	North Interlake	273

Grasshopper survey

A reminder for those participating in the grasshopper survey that counts are done during August, when the majority of grasshoppers are in the adult stage.

Agronomists and farmers who would also be interested in estimating grasshopper numbers in or around any of the fields they are in, and having this information included in the survey, are encouraged to see the survey protocol (at the link below) for more details of the survey and where to send data. Your counts would be welcomed.

Estimates of grasshopper levels can be collected during regular farm visits. "Estimates" of grasshopper populations is stressed as it is often not possible to accurately count grasshoppers along a field edge or ditch area as they will be moving around as you get near the area of the count. But estimates of what is present gives us some idea of the relative numbers that are present in different areas.

Data from the survey, along with weather data during the egg laying period of the grasshoppers, will be used to produce a grasshopper forecast for 2027.

The protocol and data sheet for the grasshopper survey is at:

<https://www.gov.mb.ca/agriculture/crops/insects/pubs/grasshopper-survey-protocol.pdf>

Identification Quiz

Question: This insect was noticed on wheat in a field near Brandon. What is it?.



Photo by Maygen Hudon –
Agronomist, Heritage Co-op,
Brandon.

Answer: This is the Mormon cricket (*Anabrus simplex*). They are a large insect that can grow to almost 8 cm (3 inches) in length. Despite its name, the Mormon cricket is actually a type of katydid, not a cricket. It takes its name from Mormon settlers in Utah.

They are not considered a pest here, but can be a significant pest in some parts of the western United States, such as Utah, Idaho, and Nevada. They are flightless, but in some parts of their range they can form migratory swarms or "bands" that travel on foot, eating almost anything (both plant and sometimes small animal) in their paths. Here they are usually non-migratory, and coloring is commonly of lighter colors (often tan or green). Individuals in bands are most commonly of a deep brown, often nearly black color.

To **report observations** on insects, plant pathogens, or weeds that may be of interest or importance to farmers and agronomists in Manitoba, please send messages to one of the following Manitoba Agriculture Pest Management Specialists.

John Gavloski, Entomologist (204) 750-0594
Kim Brown, Weed Specialist (431) 344-0239

Simon Huang, Field Crop Pathologist (204) 750-4248