PestFacts WA

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Contents

Native budworm moth trapping program will begin in July. Would you like to host a trap?

Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development (DPIRD) field researchers will again begin weekly pheromone trapping for native budworm moths (Helicoverpa punctigera) in July and are seeking interested volunteer growers and consultants to host a trap. The trapping program extends from Esperance to north of Geraldton. Volunteers play an important role in broadening the moth trapping network and filling gaps across the WA grainbelt.

Native budworm pheromone bucket trap installed in lupin crop. Photo courtesy of DPIRD.

How to host a trap

Volunteers who would like to have a native budworm trap on their property this season can contact research scientists Bec Severtson in Northam or Andrew Phillips in Geraldton.

The traps are easy to set up and installation requirements and instructions are shown on the department's Native budworm moth trapping page.

Once a moth trap is set up, host growers or consultants need to check the trap weekly, count moth numbers and report the results via email to research scientist Bec Severtson in Northam.

Moth arrival indicates when to start checking for caterpillars

Moths typically migrate into agricultural regions in late winter and spring, but their arrival is unpredictable. In 2024 native budworm flights began earlier than usual in the Geraldton port zone, highlighting the need for effective monitoring.

Weekly moth trapping data provides pulse and canola growers an early warning of moth arrival and the likely risk of native budworm caterpillars appearing in crops in the weeks following. By tracking weekly moth counts, growers and agronomists can optimise their field inspections for caterpillars ensuring timely interventions.

Moth numbers alone are not a reliable predictor of caterpillar infestations. Sweep netting remains essential for accurately determining caterpillar numbers. Large moth counts do not always equate to large caterpillar numbers as predators, parasites and weather conditions can influence survival rates.

Eggs laid by moths during August will take at least two weeks to reach 5 mm before they are detectable through sweep netting. It takes about 7 weeks (average August temperatures) from the egg stage to reach the fully-grown caterpillar stage, about 40 mm long, and the most damaging to grain crops.

Growers and agronomists can access DPIRD's free MyPestGuide CropScout application and enter their caterpillar monitoring results into the sweep net module to calculate native budworm spray thresholds quickly in the field.

Pesticide options for the control of native budworm can be found in DPIRD's 2025 Winter Spring Insecticide Guide.

Sweep netting for native budworm caterpillars in a podding canola crop. Photo courtesy of DPIRD.

Moth activity updates

A map showing native budworm moth trap data recorded during the growing season is available at Cesar Australia's MothTrapVisWA page. The map allows users to monitor the weekly changes in moth flight numbers during the season by adjusting the trapping date range bar at the bottom of the map page. Data collection will commence in late June/early July 2025.

Weekly moth trap data will be available on DPIRD's Native budworm moth trapping page and native budworm activity updates will be communicated via DPIRD's PestFacts WA e-newsletter.

Further information

For more information about the native budworm and its impact on crops refer to the department's Native budworm page.

For further information contact Research Scientists Dusty Severtson in Northam on +61 8 9690 2160 or Andrew Phillips in Geraldton on +61 8 9956 8567.

Article author: Bec Severtson (DPIRD Northam).

Are cockchafers damaging your cereal crops? We want to hear from you!

- Kondinin
- Lake Grace
- Dumbleyung

DPIRD is calling on growers and agronomists to report occurrences of cockchafers damaging crops, especially from the Lake Grace, Kondinin, Kulin and Dumbleyung regions, so that researchers can collect specimens for identification and laboratory trials. These ‘curl grubs’ or scarab beetle larvae have been persistently damaging crops in some paddocks and have been very difficult, or impossible, to control.

A cockchafer larva collected from a property near Lake Grace. Photos courtesy of DPIRD.

Cockchafer larvae damage in an oat crop near Lake Grace. Photo courtesy of DPIRD.

Growers have recently been finding cockchafer larvae causing damage to oat and barley seedlings at Dumbleyung, oat seedlings north of Lake Grace, and wheat and barley seedlings at Kondinin.

Damage to oat seedling roots caused by cockchafer larva feeding damage. Photo courtesy of DPIRD.

Cockchafer infestations have been an ongoing concern for some growers in the Lakes and Kondinin region, where root and crown feeding has led to significant crop damage and failures. Growers have reported a lack of control of cockchafers in cereal crops with foliar insecticides.

Seeking live cockchafer larvae from the Lakes region

DPIRD, with co-investment from GRDC, will be undertaking surveys and research trials on cockchafer larvae and is seeking live specimens from properties with known cockchafer infestations.

If you are finding crop damage by cockchafers, particularly in the Lake Grace, Kondinin, Kulin and Dumbleyung regions, we would like to hear from you. Please contact DPIRD Research Scientists Christiaan Valentine and Dusty Severtson to discuss and arrange a paddock visit.

We are also interested in cockchafer reports from anywhere in the WA grainbelt. You can make a report via the PestFacts WA Reporter app or email the team at pestfactswa@dpird.wa.gov.au.

New cockchafer research project

Cockchafer larvae feeding on roots of barley plants at Kondinin, highlighting their depth in the soil. Photo courtesy of DPIRD.

Cockchafers, or scarab beetle larvae, are widespread across the grainbelt, and occur in a variety of environments and habitats. While few are pest species, the number of PestFacts WA reports of crop damage from cockchafers have increased in recent years.

In response to increased reports and severity of cockchafer damage, GRDC initiated a three-year study with DPIRD researchers to explore management strategies for pest scarab species of WA grain crops. This project is titled DAW2505-006RTX, “Exploration of management strategies for pest scarab species of Australian grains.”

DPIRD Research Scientist Dusty Severtson said the project aimed to identify methods of managing these underground pests. Effective management of scarabs is complicated by the diversity of species, each with distinct life cycles, behaviours, and responses to control measures.

An understanding of the species present and their life cycle could aid in being able to target larvae in the ground or adults as they emerge and mate preventing the persistence of resident populations.

Glasshouse trials will be run during the 2025-2027 field seasons.

Further information

To read more about last year’s cockchafer activity in the Kake Grace and Kulin region see the 2024 article in the 2024 PestFacts WA Issue 3 article Cockchafer larvae are damaging crops.

For more information, contact Research Scientist Dusty Severtson in Northam on 0427 196 656

Article author: Bec Severtson (DPIRD Northam).

Timely pest alerts for canola growers

In 2025, DPIRD's entomology surveillance team will monitor 20 canola sentinel sites across the WA grainbelt and provide near real time alerts on emerging pest risks.

These alerts allow growers to respond quickly to pest outbreaks if required, protecting yields and saving resources.

Sentinel sites will be checked fortnightly from June to October for targeted economic pests, beneficial organisms or natural enemies, and biosecurity threats. Key pests monitored include native budworm, diamondback moth (DBM), green peach aphid, cabbage aphid and turnip aphid.

Throughout the season, pest alerts and regionally specific management advice will be extended via DPIRD's PestFacts WA e-newsletter.

June pest activity

Native budworm

- Maya
- Nabawa
- Spencers Brook

This week, native budworm moths were caught in surveillance traps in the northern agricultural region at Maya (44 moths) and Nabawa (52 moths) and in the Kwinana west port zone at Spencers Brook (21 moths).

Detailed information on this pest can be found at DPIRD's Native budworm page.

Diamondback moth

- Howick

Diamondback moths were also caught this week in a surveillance trap in the Esperance region at Howick (62 moths).

Detailed information on this pest can be found at DPIRD's Diamondback moth and its management in canola and crop weeds factsheet.

Surveillance techniques

At each canola site, two moth pheromone traps are installed: a bucket trap for native budworm moths and a delta trap for DBM adults. The traps are reset fortnightly after moths are counted.

Native budworm moth pheromone bucket trap. Photo courtesy of DPIRD.

Diamondback pheromone delta trap. Photo courtesy of DPIRD.

When canola plants are small, they are inspected for native budworm and DBM larvae as well as pest aphids. As the crop advances, sweep netting is used to check for native budworm and DBM larvae. Sweep net samples are also examined for natural enemies such as hoverflies, lacewings, ladybirds and parasitoid wasps of aphids and larvae.

The leaves of larger plants are checked for green peach aphids and as the season progresses, budding, flowering and podding racemes are inspected for cabbage and turnip aphids.

Meet the surveillance team

Research Scientist Andrew Phillips monitoring surveillance sites in the Geraldton port zone. Photo courtesy of DPIRD.

In the Geraldton port zone Research Scientist Andrew Phillips and Technical Officer Surya Dhakal will be monitoring sites at Ogilvie, Nabawa, Allanooka and Maya.

In the Kwinana west port zone Technical Officer Danae Warden will be monitoring sites at Wongan Hills, Bolgart, Northam, York and Dale.

Research Scientist Svetlana Micic and Technical Officer Dave Hislop installing a diamondback moth pheromone delta trap in the Albany region. Photo courtesy of DPIRD.

In the Albany port zone, Research Scientist Svetlana Micic and Technical Officer Daniel Malecki-Lee will be monitoring sites at Katanning, Cranbrook, Kendenup and Takalarup.

In the Esperance port zone Technical Officer Joel Kidd and Research Scientist Andrea Hills will be monitoring sites at Howick, Gibson, Cascade and Mount Burdett.

Further information

This program is supported by the project called ‘Seasonal status of pests and diseases delivered to growers’, a Grains Research and Development Corporation (GRDC) investment with in-kind investment from DPIRD.

For more information contact Research Scientist Cindy Webster in Narrogin on +61 8 9881 0201.

Article author: Bec Severtson (DPIRD Northam).

DPIRD's Crop Insect and Disease Identification Workshop

DPIRD Research Scientist Christiaan Valentine leading a hands-on component of the 2023 insect identification workshop. Photo courtesy of DPIRD.

The Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development (DPIRD) is offering its annual broadacre crop insect and disease identification workshop again this year.

Date: Tuesday 19 August to Thursday 21 August 2025.
Venue: Metro Hotel Perth, 61 Canning Highway, South Perth WA.

The course will cover insect identification and integrated management on Tuesday 19 August, followed by disease identification on Wednesday 20 August and Thursday 21 August. A fungicide resistance seminar, presented by Dr Fran Lopez from the Centre for Crop and Disease Management, will also take place on Day 3 of the workshop (Thursday 21 August).

This course is primarily designed for agronomists and other grains industry representatives to enhance their skills in disease and insect identification relevant to broadacre crop production in WA. It features a practical, hands-on training approach, professional and experienced presenters, and valuable take-home resource materials.

As usual participants can register to attend either or both components.

Course fees (excluding GST) are as follows:

- $400 for the full three-day program.
- $300 for the two-day disease module.
- $150 for the one-day insect module.

These fees include a course reference book and catering each day.

The workshop is co-funded by the Grains Research and Development Corporation (GRDC) through the "DPIRD Seasonal status of pests and diseases delivered to growers project" (DAW2404-005RTX).

Numbers are limited for the training days and enrolments close on Friday 25 July 2025.

For further details or to register your interest in attending, contact Research Scientist Cindy Webster in Narrogin on +61 8 9881 0201 or +61 404 819 534.

Article authors: Geoff Thomas (DPIRD Perth) and Cindy Webster (DPIRD Narrogin).

Updated winter spring insecticide guide 2025 is now available

A self-propelled sprayer. Photo courtesy of DPIRD.

DPIRD's 2025 winter spring insecticide guide can now be downloaded for free from the department's Insecticide spray guides for crops in Western Australia page.

Updated annually, this spray guide lists the chemicals and application rates registered by the Australian Pesticides and Veterinarian Medicines Authority (APVMA) for use on canola, cereal, lupin and field pea crops and pastures to control common invertebrate pests in WA.

Some changes to the guide include:

- reduced application rate of chlorpyrifos products for aphids and redlegged earth mites on pasture
- chlorpyrifos products can no longer be used in cereal crops after September 2025
- an additional active ingredient concentration for chlorantraniliprole for native budworm in lupin and field peas.

Phasing out of chlorpyrifos

The use of chlorpyrifos in agriculture has undergone recent significant regulatory changes, as outlined in the APVMA's final regulatory decision published in the APVMA's Special Gazette, 3 October 2024.

As of September 2024, chlorpyrifos products are no longer registered for use on canola, cereal and legume crops in Australia. A 12-month transition phase is currently in place allowing chlorpyrifos products already in the supply chain or on farm to be used according to their existing labels. Newly manufactured or imported chlorpyrifos products are relabelled to exclude most agricultural crops, including canola, cereals and legumes.

The application rates of chlorpyrifos products registered for cereal crops are listed in this guide during the phase out period. Trade names of products registered for pasture crops have been included.

From 30 September 2025, it will be an offence to possess, supply, or use the cancelled active constituents, chemical products and products bearing the previously approved labels.

The APVMA sets Maximum Residue Limits (MRLs) to ensure food safety and compliance with domestic and international standards. With the phase-out of chlorpyrifos, exporters must adhere to the MRLs of importing countries, which may differ from Australian standards. To ensure compliance, growers should consult their grain marketer and stay updated on any changes to MRLs in key export markets.

For more insecticide information

The spray guide is intended as a reference only. Always read chemical labels before applying insecticides. Not all insecticide trade names may be listed, so consult retailers for other registered insecticide options.

Visit the department's Insecticides page to learn more about insecticides, insect pest monitoring and beneficial insects.

A Beneficials chemical toxicity table is available to help growers and advisors make informed decisions about insecticides and miticides. It was developed through a collaboration between Cesar Australia and the University of Melbourne, with investment from the Grains Research and Development Corporation (GRDC) as part of the Australian Grains Pest Innovation Program (AGPIP).

For more information contact Senior Research Scientist Svetlana Micic in Albany on +61 8 9892 8591.

Article author: Bec Severtson (DPIRD Northam).

Spots still available at Geraldton disease management workshop

Nick Poole (Field Applied Research Australia) presenting at the 2025 Australian Fungicide Resistance Extension Network workshop at Toowoomba. Photo courtesy of Independent Consultants Australia Network.

Agronomists and grain growers are invited to discuss the cutting edge of cereal, canola and lupin disease and fungicide resistance management in a 2-day GRDC-supported workshop, brought to you by the Australian Fungicide Resistance Extension Network (AFREN).

The Perth workshop is full, however spaces are available at the Geraldton workshop.

Geraldton workshop

- Date: Tuesday 22 & Wednesday 23 July 2025
- Location: DPIRD, 20 Gregory Street, Geraldton WA, 6530
- Time: Day 1 starts at 9:00am, Day 2 starts at 8:30am and finishes by 3:00pm.

Workshop facilitator John Cameron said, “The 2025 Cereal foliar disease and resistance workshops provide the latest research to guide on farm management of foliar disease, while managing fungicide resistance in barley, wheat, canola and lupins.”

“When you put Nick Poole from Field Applied Research (FAR) Australia alongside resistance expert Fran Lopez from CCDM, Geoff Thomas and Ciara Beard with the field expertise of around 20 agronomists, the discussion will be lively and targeted on issues of regional importance and how this is reflected in advice to growers. It’s a great mix, and all who attend – no matter how experienced – will pick up new and valued understanding.”

This small group workshop covers:

- cereal growth stages and the physiology behind fungicide intervention decisions
- where different fungicides fit
- fungicide resistance management and resources
- integrating fungicides, varieties, epidemiology and seasonal risk
- management strategies that address the underlying risk of fungicide resistance
- disease management & fungicide resistance considerations in canola and lupins.

Cost is $165 (GST inclusive).

Register for this workshop via the Independent Consultants Australian Network (ICAN) website.

This AFREN workshop has been developed with support from growers and the Federal Government through the Grains Research and Development Corporation (GRDC).

For more information, contact Andrea Mathers or Erica McKay on 02 9482 4930 or erica@icanrural.com.au.

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