

# BUGWOOD Wiki

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A content management system providing a source of reliable information on agriculture, forestry and invasive species for homeowners, educators, industry professionals, and researchers

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**Spodoptera exigua**

Authors: Dr. Alton "Stormy" Sparks, Jr., Dr. David G. Riley, Dr. Philip Roberts, and Dr. Paul Gallebeau - University of Georgia

**Description**

**Adult**  
Moths are medium sized with a wingspan of 25-30 mm. The forewings are a mottled gray and brown with irregular banding and a light colored bean-shaped spot near the center. The hind wings are a more uniform white or dirty white with a dark line near the margin.

**Immature stages**  
Eggs are laid in clusters of 50-150, greenish to white and are covered with a layer of whitish scales that give the egg mass a fuzzy or cottony appearance. Larvae are pale green to yellow during the first two instars. Larger larvae vary in appearance. Large larvae tend to be green to dark green dorsally and may have a series of dashes that give the appearance of longitudinal lines on the back. Large larvae generally have a dark line along the side of the body with a light line below the dark line. The underside of large larvae are generally pink or yellow. On the second segment behind the head, there is a small black spot on each side of the body. This spot usually becomes visible to the field observer when the caterpillar reaches about 1/3 of an inch. The spot may be difficult to see on a dark caterpillar. Squeezing the caterpillar from the rear may make the spot more apparent. Larvae range from less than 1/10 of an inch when newly emerged to about 1 inch when fully grown.

**Hosts**  
Weeds, asparagus, cotton, corn, soybean, tobacco, alfalfa, table and sugar beets, pepper, tomato, potato, onion, pea, sunflower and citrus. Plants, strawberries and redroot pigweed are important wild hosts.

**Life cycle**  
Egg clusters are usually deposited on the underside of leaves. Females normally deposit 300-600 eggs during their lifetime. Eggs hatch in 2-3 days during warm weather. Early instar larvae are gregarious, feeding as a group and skeletonizing leaves. Larvae are primarily foliage feeders during the first two instars which require about 4 days. Third instar larvae disperse and will attack fruit but can complete development on foliage in the absence of fruit. Normally, larvae develop through 5 instars in 9-10 days. Larvae reach a maximum size of about 22.5 mm. Pupaion occurs in the soil and the pupal stage generally lasts 6-7 days. Total generation time is about three weeks.

**Taxonomy**

Kingdom:	Animalia
Phylum:	Arthropoda
Class:	Hexapoda (including Insecta)
Order:	Lepidoptera
Family:	Noctuidae
Genus:	Spodoptera
Species:	exigua

**Scientific Name**  
*Spodoptera exigua* (Hübner)

BugwoodWiki page on the species *Spodoptera exigua*

BugwoodWiki is fully integrated with the 117,000 images currently available through BugwoodImages. Using this integration users can easily access and use:

- Images with the proper citation
- Taxonomy information boxes
- Expert and user selected galleries of images for a species

For more information on BugwoodWiki, visit [wiki.bugwood.org](http://wiki.bugwood.org) or contact Joe LaForest 229-386-3298 or [laforest@uga.edu](mailto:laforest@uga.edu)



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