

Farmer Fact Sheet 37: Bean Pod Borer



What is it?

An insect that feeds on pods of many types of beans. The scientific name is *Maruca*.

What damage does it do?

The caterpillars do the damage. The eggs are laid on flowers, and the caterpillars feed on buds, flowers and pods. They bore into the pods and eat the seeds.

How do I identify it?

Look for flowers and pods tied together by webs made by the caterpillars. Look for chewed remains of the pods around entry holes. Look for caterpillars inside the damaged pods: they are pale with two rows of black markings on their backs (photo, left). The moth is brown with a white patch on the front wings (photo, right).

How do I manage the pod borer?

It is difficult to control. Pesticides are not recommended. They are: a) likely to kill natural enemies; b) not very effective as the caterpillars are inside the pods; c) expensive, and have to be used repeatedly; d) a danger to you and the environment.

Cultural control:

Inspect daily and hand pick the eggs and young caterpillars on the flowers.

Chemical control:

If pesticides are required, use insecticides made from bacteria, for example: Spinosad, also known as *Success*; or Bt - *Bacillus thuringiensis kurstaki*.