

Healthy Choices to Control Lawn and Garden Pests

CODLING MOTH

What Do They Look Like?

- Adult moths are speckled, greyish-brown in colour, with a distinctive bronze band on the bottom third of their wings
- Adults are about the size of a housefly, 2.5 cm long
- Caterpillars are pinkish-white with brown heads,
- 1.5 cm long

Where Do I Find Them?

- Caterpillars are found near the core of fruits such as apples, crabapples and pears
- Adult moths are usually found on the surface of fruit and leaves

Codling Moth Life Cycle

- Adult females lay eggs on the surface of fruit or on leaves when trees are in bloom (usually May-June)
- Caterpillars emerge one to three weeks later, and immediately tunnel into fruit where they feed and develop
- After feeding on the fruit, they emerge and crawl down the tree trunk to spin cocoons, emerging as adult moths two to three weeks later
- There are two to three generations a year
- Some caterpillars overwinter in the cocoon stage and emerge when trees bloom

What Does The Damage Look Like?

- Caterpillars tunnel holes in fruit such as apples, crabapples, pears, peaches and plums



- They make a small entry hole near the bottom of the fruit and leave behind crumbly brown droppings called frass

Are Codling Moths Really A Problem?

- Codling moths can cause significant fruit loss
- Damaged fruit cannot be stored but the undamaged parts can be eaten

What Can I Do? Non-Pesticide Treatments

- Wrap corrugated cardboard bands or burlap sections (10 to 20 cm wide) around the base of tree trunks, starting in mid-July, to intercept the first generation of caterpillars as they hatch
- Check cardboard or burlap every day and destroy any caterpillars or cocoons found; this will reduce the next generation of moths. Do this from May to October
- Pick up any infested fruit and dispose in household garbage

How Can I Prevent It Next Year?

- In early spring (April-May), check fruit trees and scrape loose bark to remove any over-wintering cocoons
- Check developing fruit for entry holes from the time the first petals fall
- Pick up all dropped fruit and dispose in household garbage to prevent caterpillars from leaving and overwintering in the soil
- Set up a winter bird feeder to attract birds to your yard, as they will eat overwintering cocoons

Tips For A Healthy Garden

- Ensure soil is healthy, well conditioned with organic compost and has adequate drainage (remember that plants get most of their nutrients from the soil)
- Plan your garden so plants are put in areas where they naturally thrive (dry or wet, sun or shade)
- Plant in raised beds (good for the plants, good for the back)
- Use native plants that are already acclimatized, require low maintenance and have an in-bred resistance to local pests and diseases
- Water deeply but infrequently to maintain a strong root structure
- Protect and attract native beneficial species (give them a place to live and a source of water and they'll do the rest)
- Practise annual crop rotation for each type of vegetable (keeps patterns of disease or insect invasion in check)
- Fertilize regularly in spring and fall with organic compost

