

2021 Black Cutworm (BCW) Trapping and Reporting Instructions

Black cutworm (BCW) moths migrate to Ontario in early spring via strong storm fronts coming from their overwintering sites in the southern US. Moths tend to arrive first in fields along the Lake Erie shore. Pheromone traps help to detect their arrival and understand which regions and when the corn crop is at risk. Adult moths prefer to lay their eggs in grassy vegetation in early spring (April to May, especially fields with annual weeds like chickweed). No till and reduced till corn fields are at higher risk. Cutting injury in corn is expected to once 135GDD (base 10.4C) have accumulated, starting those calculations once the first 8 or more moths are captured in a trap over a 2 day period.

The **Trap Set Up Instructions** are below. **Trap Monitoring and Reporting Instructions** are on Page 2. Click on the following for a [BCW Trap Supply List and TAW Trap Supply Companies](#).

Trap Set Up Instructions

1. Use 1 bucket traps (**All White or Yellow and White versions are preferred, though green buckets will also work**) per field. Set up traps in late March, early April and monitor until the end of June when the risk to corn has passed. Bucket traps can fill up quickly and moths can rub against each other losing their markings.
2. Position the trap on the prevailing wind side, along the edge of the field. This ensures that the pheromone plume will carry into the field being monitoring.
3. Mount the trap so that it hangs from a stake or T bar so that **the bottom of the trap is only 1 metre above the ground** (Fig. 1). Do not use a bucket trap that was previously used to monitor for western bean cutworm as it will already be contaminated with WBC pheromone.
4. One lure is placed inside the small cage area (Fig. 2) hanging from the roof of the bucket trap while the vapour strip is placed inside at the bottom of the bucket (Fig.3). **Change the lure every 2 weeks**. Discard spent lures back home or the office (not in the field).



Figure 1. BCW Bucket Trap is set up to hang 1 metre from the ground, along the fields' edge. Photo credit: M. Schuh, MSU Extension



*Figure 2. Pheromone lure is placed inside the cage above the funnel and is changed every three weeks.



*Figure 3. Vapour strip is taped inside the bottom or side of the bucket and lasts the entire season.

***Note** – images show an all green bucket but white and yellow or all white bucket traps are more effective for BCW.

Trap Monitoring and Reporting Instructions

1. Traps should be checked at least weekly. Enter trap site info and weekly trap counts into the Great Lakes and Maritimes Pest Monitoring Network at: <https://arcg.is/OLry5a>
2. Trap counts entered are always for the previous week's moth catch.
3. As we approach peak flight, traps may need to be checked more than once a week so that moths are still easy to identify and have not lost all of their markings.
4. Change the BCW pheromone lures **every 2 weeks** so that the pheromone plume is strong enough to attract the moths to the trap. Discard the spent lure back at the office or at home.

BCW Moth Identification



Black cutworm moths are similar in size to western bean cutworm moths. They have greyish brown wings with small dagger-like marks running through a bean or kidney-shaped spot on each of the forewings. They have long thin feathery like antennae. Photo credit: Purdue University.