



## Small Grains XII

### **False Wireworm**

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#### **Identification (and life cycle/seasonal history)**

Several species of false wireworms, *Eleodes* spp., occur in the Great Plains, including the prairie false wireworm. The flightless adult false wireworms are known as darkling beetles. These are large black or reddish brown beetles, which can be recognized by the odd angle that the body is held at when they run. The larvae are similar in appearance to wireworm larvae. False wireworm adults lay their eggs in soil and most of the life cycle is spent in the larval stage. Larvae will be found at varying depths in the soil, depending on temperature and moisture. Life cycles are variable, lasting from one to three years.

#### **Plant response and damage**

False wireworms damage wheat by feeding on seeds, seedlings and young plants, resulting in lost stand. Yield losses occur if plant population losses are large enough to overcome the compensatory ability of the crop.

#### **Management approaches**

##### **Biological Control**

No applied biological controls exist for the control of false wireworms.

##### **Cultural Control**

Cultural practices that promote rapid germination and seedling growth to shorten the period that the plant is most vulnerable to attack.

##### **Chemical Control**

Seed treatments labeled for wireworms also may be used to control false wireworms.

Categories: Small grains, Insects, False Wireworm

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