

CLICK BEETLES / WIREWORMS

Wireworms are the immature stage of a click beetle. They damage plantings and cause seedling death. Wireworms range in length from ¼ to 1½ inches and are found most often in grasslands or turf. Since they feed on the seeds prior to germination or just after germination, wireworms reduce plant populations. The plant stand may continue to deteriorate because wireworms bore into underground portions of stem, causing plants to wither and die. Most wireworm larvae are hard and white or yellowish in color.



	WIREWORM LARVAL STAGE	CLICK BEETLE ADULT STAGE
SIZE	Up to 1½ inches	Up to 1¾ inches

While there are many different species of wireworms that attack cultivated crops, all of their biologies are similar. They spend the winter as larval and adult stages in the ground. In the early spring, the adult click beetles become active. Click beetles are usually brown to black in color and streamlined with the body tapering toward the rear. The joint between the thorax and abdomen is loose and flexible, and when these beetles are placed on their backs, they click their abdomen against the ground and toss themselves several inches to flip over.

Using intercropping techniques and rotating crops from year to year can prevent an infestation of wireworms. Birds are an important predator of wireworms, especially after a field has been cultivated. Flooding for wireworm control can be an effective cultural control, but it is a slow process that may not be practical. More studies are needed, but current information suggests a minimum of six weeks of continuous flooding is needed during the summer to obtain wireworm control. Flooding during late spring and summer will kill the wireworms and prevent egg laying by the adult click beetles. Longer flooding durations are needed during colder months.

Information from EDIS document ENY-665
And University of Kentucky at
<http://www.uky.edu/Agriculture/Entomology/entfacts/fldcrops/ef120.htm>