

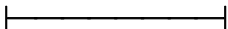
# Mole Cricket

Three species of mole crickets, introduced to the Southeastern United States around 1900, have caused serious damage to turf grass. The introduced species are the short-winged mole cricket, the southern mole cricket, and the tawny mole cricket. These are not the only mole crickets found in North America, but they are the most damaging.



NOTICE: the fossorial front legs for digging

**SIZE**    **Up to 1¼ inches**



The crickets usually damage seedlings, feeding aboveground on foliage or stem tissue, and below-ground on roots and tubers. Girdling of the stems of seedling plants at the soil surface is a common form of injury. Mole crickets sometimes sever young plants and pull them belowground to be consumed. Additional injury to small plants is caused by soil surface tunneling, which may dislodge seedlings or cause them to dry out.

Grasses differ in their susceptibility to injury. Bahiagrass and bermudagrass are especially injured by mole crickets. St. Augustine grass seems to tolerate injury because of its dense growth habit, but it too is injured at times. Centipedegrass and zoysiagrass are infrequently affected.

The beneficial nematode *Steinernema scapterisci* can be purchased from commercial suppliers to control mole crickets. The nematodes are applied in a solution to the soil, following the manufacturer's labeled instructions. The nematode survives well in normal turf conditions and should reproduce and help keep mole cricket problems in check. Nematodes are more effective when applied to adult mole crickets than when applied to young crickets.

From UF Featured Creatures website at

[http://www.entnemdept.ufl.edu/creatures/orn/turf/pest\\_mole\\_crickets.htm](http://www.entnemdept.ufl.edu/creatures/orn/turf/pest_mole_crickets.htm)