

How to manage amaranth pests for higher grain yields

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Pigweed beetle

Pigweed (*Hypolixus haerens* Boheman) is a stem borer which attacks *Amaranth* species

- Adults lay eggs on young plants at 3 weeks after emergence
- The larvae tunnels and destroys plant tissues leading to weakening of the plant and leading to susceptibility to lodging and secondary infections
- Yield losses may be up to 40% if not controlled early. By the time the hole is open on the stem, the black or brownish beetle will have left the plant for another suitable host plant to lay eggs on the stem
- Apply a systemic insecticide within the 1st month of planting to control the pest
- During the dry spell the pigweed beetle burrows in the soil to wait for the next rain season for breeding



Open hole on the stem



Spraying early prevents damage

Continuous surveillance against pest and diseases

- Scout the amaranth field regularly for pests and diseases
- Damping off may occur at the seedling stage due to overcrowding
- Root rot may also occur in waterlogged conditions
- Avoid black cotton soil which is prone to water-logging
- Uproot (rogue) and bury any plant which has disease symptoms
- Consult an extension officer if the disease effect is widespread



Regularly scout crop for pests



Rogue diseased plant (left) and bury in soil

- Other leaf pests on amaranth include leaf miners and beetles
- Bollworm are also common as shown below
- Spray with systemic insecticide to prevent damage
- Destroy plant debris to ensure complete destruction of pest reservoir to reduce their population in subsequent seasons



Uncontrolled severe damage by leaf pests

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