

Wireworms and bait balls

Wireworm larvae tend to remain where they hatch, moving mainly up and down in the soil profile rather than laterally through a field. That means infestation levels can vary widely from farm to farm, field to field, even acre to acre.



Is it wireworm damage?

When you first see what you think is wireworm damage in the crop, dig into the soil to find the insects. They move fast and will burrow away from the light, but if you dig early in the spring, when warm soil temperatures and germinating seeds are attracting them to the surface, chances are that digging will confirm the presence of wireworms.

Bait balls are the best means of determining the extent of a wireworm problem and are an excellent assessment tool.

How do bait balls work?

Bait balls will help you assess where in the field those wireworms are. Bait balls are typically made from wheat flour or oatmeal and work by releasing CO₂, which attracts wireworms looking for food. It's important to keep in mind that bait balls are a good measure of insect presence, but not density.



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For more information, visit Syngenta.ca or contact our Customer Interaction Centre at 1-87-SYNGENTA (1-877-964-3682).

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Bait ball recipe

Ingredients

1 to 1½ cup oatmeal **or** wheat flour
2 tbsp honey
1/2 cup water

To make one bait ball, mix oatmeal **or** wheat flour with honey and water until the mixture sticks together enough to make a ball. You can put the ball directly into the ground, or tie it up in nylon (mesh bags, onion bags, old socks or cheesecloth also work well), which will make it easier to retrieve.

Using wheat in a bait trap as your source of CO₂ is another option.

For a video demonstration of how to build an alternative bait trap, featuring Ted Labun, Syngenta Seedcare™ Technical Lead for Western Canada, please visit [Syngenta.ca/buildabaittrap](https://www.syngenta.ca/buildabaittrap)



Oatmeal bait ball



Bait ball in nylon

Where should I place the bait balls?

Bury the bait balls in 4- to 6-inch deep holes and mark them with flags. You will need about 20 evenly spaced bait balls per acre to get a reasonable assessment of the presence of wireworms. Check the baits every four to five days to see if they've attracted any wireworms.

Bait balls are not always foolproof. If wireworms are sufficiently fed, they will not be attracted by the presence of a new food source and will not go to the trap. If the ground has recently been tilled and is rife with CO₂ sources, they will not go to the trap. Still, bait balls are the best means of determining the extent of a wireworm problem and are an excellent assessment tool.