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from the Peninsula Property Owners Association



Army Worm Sighting in River Run

Over the past week, we have been on the look out for army worms, a small caterpillar that appears this time of years and feeds voraciously on turf. As of today, 8/20/24, we have seen evidence of army worms active within the community. Our consultants have seen evidence of decline in some common open space areas near Swanhaven, Dembridge, Shearer Road, and in phase 5.

Here is a brief summary about Army Worms:



As the name suggests, these pests make their appearance in the late summer or early fall. These insects can destroy a lawn in a very short period of time, sometimes with the damage seeming to occur overnight. They feed on the leaf blades of grasses, leaving behind only tough stems. This defoliation can stress and weaken lawns, leading to brown patches in the field that can rapidly increase in size. They often travel in waves, searching for new forage, thus the name army worms. It can appear like the entire lawn is moving.

Scouting for the fall armyworm is important, as they can very quickly become a problem. Be on the lookout for small striped larvae that range in color from light green to almost black. They have a distinctive "face" marking that looks like a light colored inverted "Y". These larvae feed for about 14 days before pupating into the adult moth. The last four days is when they eat the most and can do the most damage. In order to scout for the armyworm, look closely at the ground and ruffle the grass to dislodge any armyworms. Count the number of larvae within a square foot area. Do this at multiple sites throughout the lawn. If you average more than 3 caterpillars that are ¼ inch or longer per square foot then you have reached the threshold for treatment.

Should everyone panic? NO! But be diligent and on the lookout for sudden browning of your turf and be ready to respond quickly. These little guys come in quantity and do damage very quickly. Most over-the-counter insecticides are effective treatments.

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