

# Discover the Fauna of Our Campus

## **Beet Webworm Moth / Meadow Moth (*Loxostege sticticalis*)**

Order: Lepidoptera (Butterflies and Moths)

Family: Crambidae (Grass Moths)

Genus: *Loxostege*

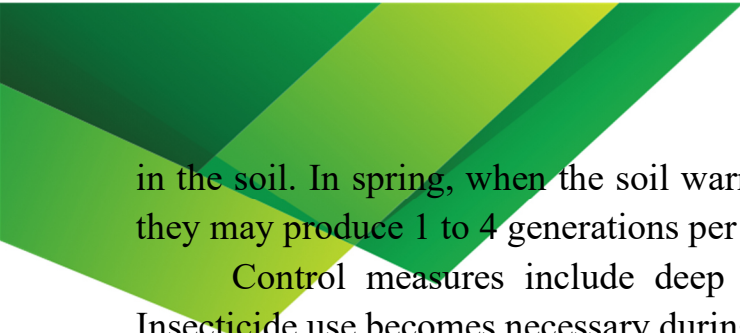
Species: *Loxostege sticticalis*



The beet webworm moth is one of the most destructive agricultural pests, known for its highly polyphagous larvae that can cause massive damage to crops. The adult moth is grayish-brown with a yellowish stripe along the edges of its wings. The main threat comes from its caterpillars, which can feed on more than 200 plant species. They especially prefer sugar beet, sunflower, maize, and various legumes. This species is capable of long-distance migration. Strong winds can carry them hundreds of kilometers away. Their reproductive capacity is very high; a single female can lay up to 600 eggs, usually in clusters on the underside of leaves.

The larvae are very active and drop to the ground immediately when disturbed. They can completely consume leaves, leaving only the veins behind. During outbreak years, they may move across fields in large “living waves.”

This insect prefers hot and dry conditions. In humid years, their populations decrease due to fungal diseases. They overwinter in the larval stage inside cocoons



in the soil. In spring, when the soil warms, they pupate. Depending on the region, they may produce 1 to 4 generations per year.

Control measures include deep plowing to destroy cocoons in the soil. Insecticide use becomes necessary during mass outbreaks. Adults are most active in the evening and at night and are strongly attracted to light sources. Population forecasting is very important for agricultural planning. They also feed on various wild plants in nature. The caterpillars are green with black stripes and can rapidly destroy vegetation. The beet webworm moth is considered one of the most economically important quarantine pests. Scientists continuously monitor its migration routes.

