Lawn Caterpillars

Today on Gardening in a Minute: lawn caterpillars.

Are lawn caterpillars doing your mowing for you? Young caterpillars can injure turf by chewing notches along the edge of the leaves, and mature caterpillars can consume entire patches of grass down to the crown.

Common turf caterpillars include the tropical sod webworm, the fall armyworm, and the striped grass looper.

All of the larvae feed at night, hiding in a curled position near the soil surface during the day. Part the grass in the affected areas to identify the culprit.

Spot treatments with products labeled for lawn caterpillar use may be applied when the damaged area is still small. Be sure to follow all label instructions.

Your turf can recover from damage if kept healthy and properly irrigated. Reduce your lawn’s susceptibility to infestation by using slow-release fertilizers responsibly.

For more information about lawn caterpillars, contact your county Extension office or visit Gardening in a Minute dot com.

Gardening in a Minute is a production of the University of Florida’s Environmental Horticulture Department, IFAS Extension, and WUFT-FM.