



# Moroccan Locust

## What is Moroccan locust?

Moroccan locust (*Locusta marocana*) is a chewing insect that damages wheat and other crops. They are 22 to 39 mm long; reddish yellow with dark spots and red on their hind legs. The young nymphs only eat the leaves of their host plants, but as they grow, they will also eat green stems, grain and fruit of crops.

## Impact

Moroccan locust is commonly found throughout the Mediterranean and central Asia (e.g., Iran, Afghanistan, Kazakhstan, etc.). They breed in great numbers in deserts, foothills, and lower slopes of mountains at altitudes between 500 and 1000 meters. Both the wingless nymphs and winged adults do great damage to cotton, cereals, alfalfa, vegetables, and melons.



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## Prevention and Control

Eggs are laid in firm, bare soil, and areas with heavy grazing are particularly suitable for laying eggs. Physical, chemical and biological controls are most effective against young larvae because of their size, inability to fly, and restricted movements.

### Phytosanitary Measures

- In the cooler months, identify the sites where the locusts lay their eggs (about 2 cm below the surface). Plough the fields (at least 4 cm deep) to bring pods to the surface, where eggs are destroyed by the elements (e.g., sun and temperature, etc.).
- Use shallow trenches to trap and then bury the young as they crawl towards the crop fields.

Chemical Control: Insecticide sprays include organophosphates (e.g., methyl parathion-, malathion), pyrethroids (e.g., fenvalerate, deltamethrin), and chitin inhibitors (e.g., diflubenzuron, flufenoxuron). Poison baits are also possible. Always follow safety instructions.

Biological Control: *Metarhizium anisopliae* var. *acridum*, is a viable bio-pesticide. The mycoinsecticide is highly specific to economically important locusts. (See Green Muscle®). Entomopathogenic microsporidia, like *Nosema locustae* can also be effective. Of course, availability can be an issue.

## Field Monitoring

Economic injury level for the Moroccan locust is two to five nymphs per m<sup>2</sup>.

**Prepared by Frank Zalom, Nick Madden and Mark Bell © 2011.**

**Reference:** <http://www.plantwise.org/?dsid=19438&loadmodule=plantwisedatasheet&page=4270&site=234>

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