

It's only a matter of time: Leek moth management recommendations for conventional onion growers

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Leek moth (*Acrolepiopsis assectella* Zeller) is a pest of Allium vegetables, including leeks, garlic, onions and shallots. Native to Europe, the moth was first identified in the United States in 2009 in Plattsburgh, New York. It has expanded its distribution south and the major onion production areas in NY are threatened.

Leek moth larvae feed on leaves, stems, and occasionally bulbs of plants. Although leek moth injury rarely kills the plants, it significantly reduces the marketability of crops; in other words, minor damage can cause significant economic loss to producers of Allium vegetables. There are 2 to 3 generations per year in New York. Injury first appears in June as ragged leaves or “window” injury on leaves. Following generations increase damage throughout the field through September.

There are effective control practices that can be used against leek moth. First, it is essential to monitor the population so that applications of selected practices can be precisely timed. Monitoring methods and cultural, biological and chemical control strategies will be presented in the talk with an emphasis on what large-scale growers can do. Also, the presentation will explain how to combine leek moth management strategies with standard onion thrips management practices.