

# Mole cricket

## Mole cricket

*Gryllotalpa* sp.

## Distribution

Mole crickets occur in all cane areas, but are usually pests only in poorly drained areas.

## Damage

Mole crickets burrow underground and chew at eyes and young shoots on setts. They may bore into the sett, making a clean-cut circular hole (Photo 1).

## Description

The adult is a strong-bodied insect, 25-30 mm long, covered with dull velvety dark brown to grey-brown short hairs (Photo 2). The head is blunt and broadly convex and there is a tight waist between thorax and abdomen. Wings are folded flat on the back of the body, and the front wings stretch only about half-way down the abdomen. Legs are short and thick, and are usually held close to the body. The first pair of legs are broadened and clawed for digging. Soft spines about 5 mm long stick out from the abdomen. Nymphs are similar but are smaller and do not have wings.

## Biology

Mole crickets feed at night and adults are attracted to lights. Mole crickets make deep permanent burrows in the soil. They can be found more readily by following the burrows rather than by digging around damaged setts. Eggs are laid in a chamber in the soil and the nymphs take several months to develop to adults.

## Management

Damage usually occurs before mole crickets are seen. Damaged setts should be replaced. No insecticides are registered.



Photo 1: Mole cricket damage.



Photo 2: Adult mole cricket.