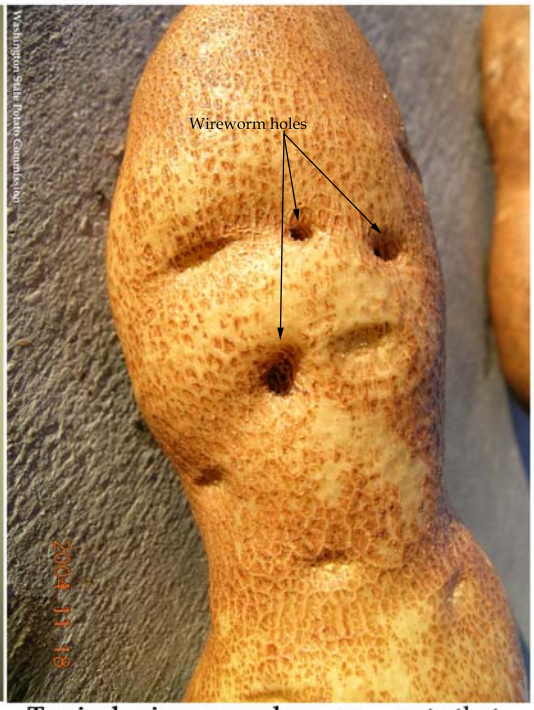
Wireworms

See also: http://www.potatoes.com/research.cfm

Large wireworm larvae. These were taken from harvested tubers (see reverse). Wireworms are not normally found in damage like that at the right.



Typical wireworm damage -- note that wounds are healed. This kind of wireworm hole usually penetrates the tuber for only a short distance.

Adult *Limonius canus*.
Most wireworms affecting potatoes in eastern Washington are *Limonius* spp. Western WA faces new European wireworms, *Agriotes* spp.
Adults are also known as 'click beetles'.

Biology & Management

1. Very long life cycle, with individual larvae often living 2-3 years in the soil.
2. Adults emerge and fly in the spring.
3. Potato crops following grain crops or weedy fallow are especially at risk.
4. Sampling for larvae is possible, but an effective method to predict damage risk has not been developed.
5. Damage can occur in spring to seed pieces, to tubers during bulking, and after vine kill (avoid in-field storage to prevent the latter type of damage).
6. The fumigant Telone can effectively control wireworms, but should be applied in the fall before soil temperatures cool and wireworms move deeper.

Washington State Potato Commission (Phone: 509-765-8845)

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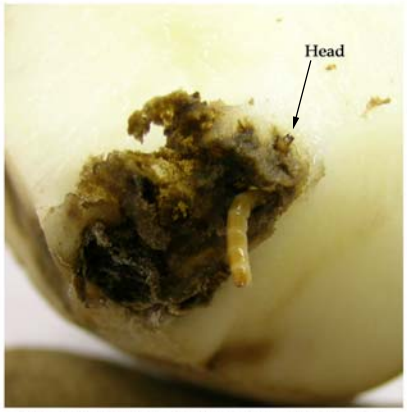
Typical damage.
Wireworm damage at harvest is often in the form of clean, straight, healed tunnels going only a fraction of an inch into the tuber. Larvae are rarely found in this kind of damage.

Unusual damage -- infested at harvest.
Tubers are sometimes infested late in the season or after vine kill, and then larvae are usually still present, and tunneling can be extensive, unhealed, and filled with decomposing organisms.

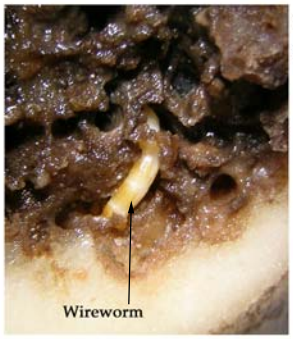

External symptoms.


Internal damage partly exposed.


Internal damage fully exposed.



Live larva in tuber in above 3 photos.



Wireworms initiated this rot.

Decomposer mites move into active tunnels and rotten tissue.

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