



Cutworms On the Move

By Dr. Moon

There has been a significant rise in cutworm activity all over Texas recently, with many species inhabiting Texas landscapes from May to September. In one season, up to five generations of cutworms can be present in Texas, and this year, they are getting an early start. The life cycle of a cutworm typically involves egg-laying, hatching, several larval stages, pupation, and finally, emergence as an adult moth.



"C" shaped army cutworm larva

Photo credit: Robert Bowling, Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service Bugwood.org



Army cutworm moth.

Photo credit: John Capinera, University of Florida,

Army cutworms, Black Cutworms, Cutworms, dingy cutworms, granulate cutworms, mesquite cutworms, and variegated cutworms are the primary culprits that can wreak havoc in landscapes. These diverse species share a common love for feasting on various plants, including annual color, turf, shrubs, and ground cover.

The cutworms are the larvae of the miller moth, a member of the Noctuidae family. They are nocturnal and have grayish-dingy black skin with markings on the top of their caterpillar body. They hide under debris and in the soil during the day and feed at night to protect themselves from birds. When threatened, they curl up into a C-shape.

Cutworms can quickly destroy annual color beds and turf, resulting in missing plants and bare turf areas. Once there are enough cutworms to warrant treatment, they are easily controlled with any pesticide that can control caterpillars. Common materials used for control are Bifenethrin and BT (*Bacillus thuringiensis*). Bifenthrin is a synthetic pyrethroid that can be applied as a spray or granules, while BT is a natural bacteria that is typically sprayed on the plants. If you see cutworms in large numbers, treat them immediately, or your grass will disappear.

EVE'S NECKLACE

An Underused Gem

By Dr. Moon



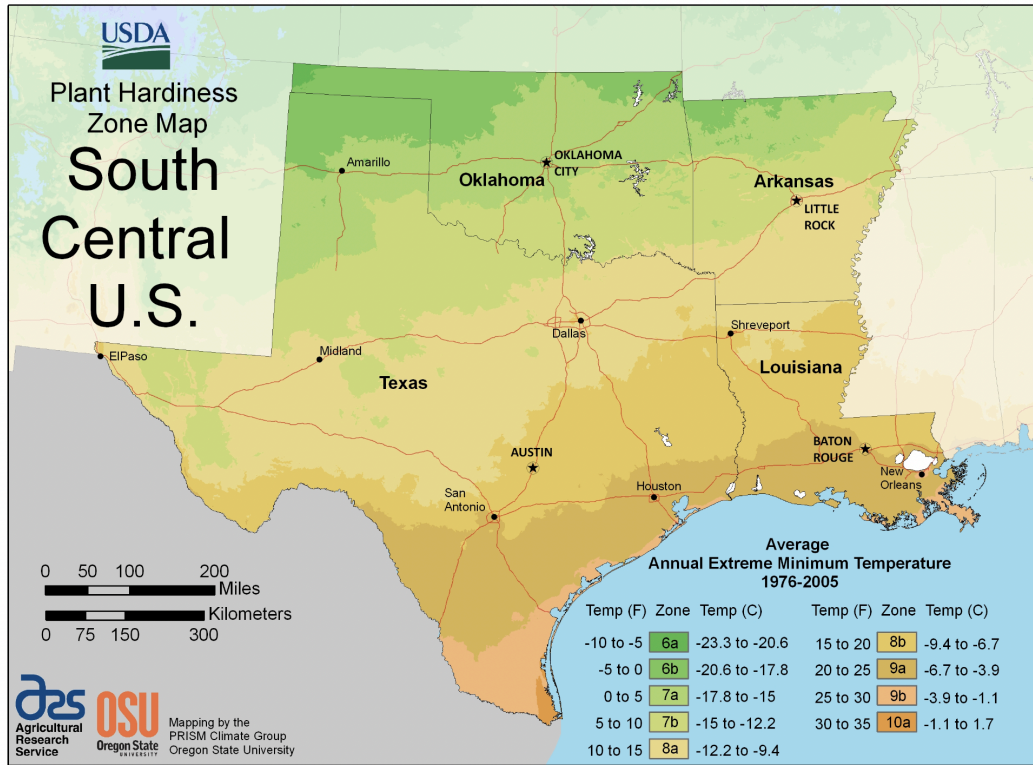
Eve's Necklace or Texas Sophora (*Sophora affinis*) is not just a fantastic small to medium-sized ornamental tree, but it's also perfectly suited for the Texas landscape. It thrives in plant zones 7-9 and is well-adapted to Texas weather, being native to this region. Choosing Eve's Necklace for your Texas landscape is a confident choice.

The tree's drooping clusters of white to pink flowers in spring are a sight to behold, making it an excellent plant for attracting pollinators. From these flowers, it produces black seed pods that are 2-4 inches long. This deciduous tree adorns itself with bright green foliage in the spring and compound pinnate leaves with many oval leaflets. These stunning characteristics make Eve's Necklace a tree that commands admiration, growing up to 25 feet tall and 15 feet wide.

Despite its adaptability and striking features, Eve's Necklace remains an underused gem in Texas landscapes. This tree, native to Texas, is a champion of drought, high summer heat, and a wide range of humidity. Its resilience and unique beauty make it a perfect choice for those seeking a distinctive tree for their landscape. If you're looking for a flowering accent for your yard, consider Eve's Necklace for a touch of exclusivity.

STAY IN THE ZONE:

To improve your gardening experience in Texas, it's essential to choose plants suitable for your area's climate. You can use the **Plant Hardiness Zone Map** to determine which plants best suit your zone. Most plants are labeled with their zone number, but you can also search online for their numbers. Sticking to plants compatible with your zone can help ensure a thriving garden.





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