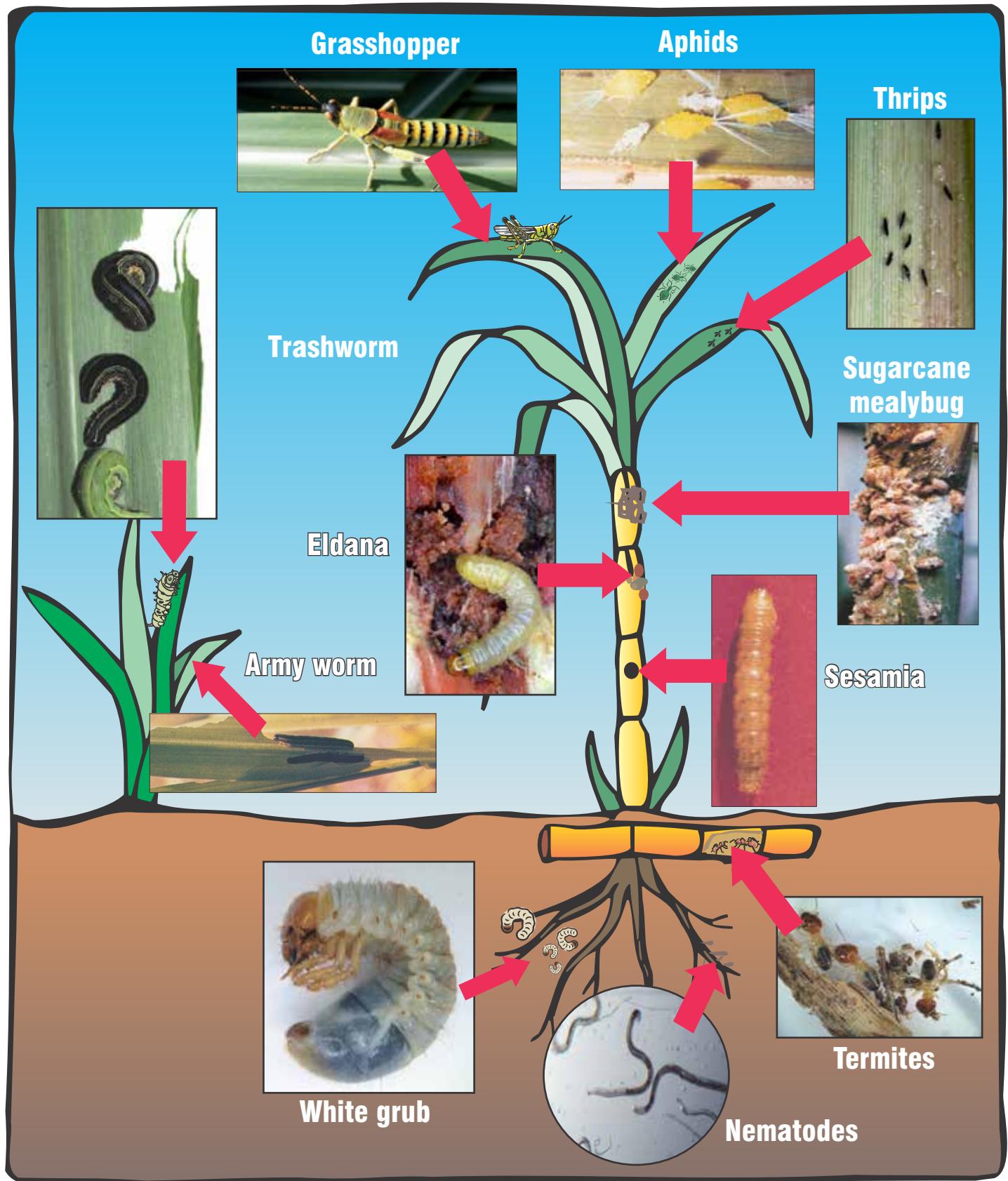


Several insect pests damage sugarcane



Eldana Borer

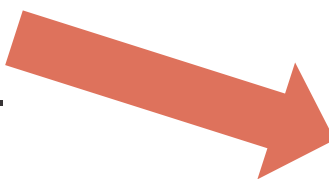
Eldana is found:

- Predominantly in warmer, coastal areas.
- In cane of all ages, at any time.
- In stressed cane.



Damage caused:

- Bores into cane stalks.
- Can destroy the entire crop.



What to do:

- Inspect cane to be carried over.
- Immediately mill infested cane.
- Pre-trashing can be done.
- Cut cane as young as possible.
- Only apply recommended rates of Nitrogen.
- Do not carry over old or stressed cane.
- Plant less susceptible cane varieties.
- Plant only inspected seed cane.



Sesamia Borer

- A sugarcane borer similar to Eldana.
- Does less damage than Eldana.



Differences between Eldana & Sesamia:

- Eldana is more active than Sesamia.
- Eldana wriggles more vigorously than Sesamia when touched.
- Eldana moves backwards when touched on the head.
- Eldana often has a silk thread, Sesamia does not.
- Eldana is dark grey in colour, Sesamia is pink.
- Eldana bores lower down stalk.
Sesamia bores towards top of stalk



Trash Caterpillar

Trash Caterpillar is found:

- Usually in trashed fields
- During the cutting season (May - Nov)
- At night feeding on the leaves of young cane.
- During the day under the trash blanket.

Damage caused:

- Yield losses up to 17tc/ha can occur with a severe infestation.
- The crop will recover.



Control:

- Natural control - fungi, parasitic flies and wasps, birds, ants, spiders.
- Use of Insecticides **IS NOT RECOMMENDED**

Sugarcane Thrips

- Minute insects with slender bodies and fringed wings.
- Adults dark brown to black, (1mm long).
- Nymphs colourless to yellow with red eyes.



Sugarcane thrips is found:

- Within leaf spindles.
- Found by unrolling spindle leaves.
- Year round, most common from Oct to March

Damage caused:

- Feeds on sugarcane leaves.
- Leaf-tips tied together and later become dry and twisted.
- Causes yellow to white patches on open leaves.



Control:

- Apply systemic insecticides at planting.
- In ratoon crops, apply foliar insecticides.
- Avoid planting late season crops.

White Grub

“Comma - shaped”, whitish-grey grub.



White Grub is found:

- Around the roots of sugarcane plants.
- February to August.



Damage caused:

- Feeds on sugarcane roots.
- Poor growth and the yellowing of leaves when large numbers are present.



Control:

- Control is difficult.
- Natural control (fungi and soil predators) is unreliable.
- Contact insecticides need to reach the pest
 - difficult in ratoon crops.
- Insecticides **ARE NOT RECOMMENDED.**

Termites

- Do not normally harm cane.
- Damage is normally to newly planted cane setts, during dry weather and in sandy soils when termites look for moisture.

Control:

- No economical control available.
- Onset of rain helps.

What to do?

- Replant (gap fill) affected areas.



Nematodes

- Are tiny worms that feed on the roots of sugarcane
- Cannot be seen with the naked eye
- Damage most severe in sandy soils

Above ground symptoms

- Uneven and stunted growth, poor tillering, spikey leaves.

Below ground symptoms

- Short, stubby roots
- Swellings/galls may be present but not always visible

What to do?

- Send soil and root sample to lab for analyses to confirm presence of damaging nematodes

Control

- Soils with <6% clay: Use a nematicide
- Soils with >6% clay: First assess use of nematicide by using test strips
- Use tolerant varieties
- Choose green manure crops carefully, some decrease nematode numbers e.g. oats
- Encase sett at planting with kraal manure/filter cake to provide physical barrier

