



# AGRI MAGAZINE

(International E-Magazine for Agricultural Articles)

Volume: 03, Issue: 05 (May, 2026)

Available online at <http://www.agrimagazine.in>

© Agri Magazine, ISSN: 3048-8656

## Insect Pests of Pulses and Their Management

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Chickpea (*Cicer arietinum*) commonly known as gram or Bengal gram, is an important pulse crop of India grown mainly during the rabi season. It is rich in protein, carbohydrate, vitamins, and minerals, making it an important part of the Indian diet. Chickpea is used as dal, roasted grain, green vegetable and besan flour. The crop is important because it improves soil fertility by fixing atmospheric soil nitrogen through root nodules. It also requires less water and grows well in dry and semi-arid regions, making it suitable for agriculture. India is the largest producer of chickpea in the world. Major producing states are Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, Maharashtra, Uttar Pradesh, and Karnataka. According to recent 2025-2026 estimates, India produces about 11.3-11.8 million tonnes of chickpea annually from nearly 10 million hectares of land. The average productivity is around 1.1-1.3 tonnes per hectare. However, chickpea production is seriously affected by many insect pests. These pests attack the crop formation and can reduce yield as well as grain quality. Therefore, proper pest management is necessary for obtaining healthy and profitable crops.

### Important Insects

#### 1. Gram Pod Borer (*Helicoverpa armigera*)

This is the most serious pest of chickpea. The caterpillar feeds on leaves, flowers and pods. It makes circular holes in pods and eats developing grains, causing heavy yield loss.

The ETL of gram pod borer is 2 early instar larvae/ plant. And 5-8 eggs /plant

#### Management

- Install 5-12 pheromone traps /hectare
- Deep summer ploughing destroys pupae in soil. Crop rotation reduces pest carryover. Use of insecticides such as Spinosad 45 SC and Indoxacarb 14.5 SC. Spraying should be done only when pest population reaches economic threshold level.

#### 2. Cutworm (*Agrotis ypsilon*)

Cutworm attacks young seedlings by cutting them near ground level during night time, reducing plant population.

#### Management

- Deep ploughing before sowing. Clean cultivation and weed removal.
- Application of poison bait in the evening and seed treatment should be done with insecticides.
- Use insecticides like Chlorpyrifos 20 EC and Fipronil 5 SC

#### 3. Aphid (*Aphis craccivora*)

Aphids are small soft bodied insects that suck sap from tender leaves, shoots and flowers. Infested plants become weak leaves curl and growth is reduced. Aphids also secrete honeydew, which encourages fungal growth.

#### Management

- Grow resistant variety. And avoid excess nitrogen fertilizer.
- Conservation of ladybird beetles and other natural predator

- Spray neem oil or NSKE. And also use important insecticides such as Imidacloprid 17.8 SL.

#### 4. Leaf Miner (*Liriomyza cicerina*)

The larva of leaf miner feeds inside leaves and make zigzag tunnels called mines. This reduces photosynthesis and weakens the plant.

##### Management

- Removal of infected leaves and sowing the crop timely. And one should be used resistant variety.
- Use of biological control agents and need based insecticide spray and use important insecticide such as Abamectin and Cyromazine.

#### 5. Termites (*Odontotermus obesus*)

Termites attack roots and stems, especially under dry conditions. Affected plants dry up suddenly and can be easily pulled from the soil.

##### Management

- Proper seed treatment is done before sowing and proper irrigation to maintain soil moisture.
- Destruction of termite mounds should be done and also use important insecticides such as Fipronil and Chlorpyrifos

#### Conclusion

Effective management of insect pests in chickpea is very important for increasing crop yield and improving farmers' income. The use of improved pest management methods such as pheromone trap, biological control, neem products and recommended insecticides helps farmers reduce crop losses and produce better quality grains. Integrated pest management not only controls harmful insects but also protects beneficial organism and the environment.

By adopting scientific and ecofriendly pest management practices, farmers can achieve higher productivity, better profits and sustainable chickpea cultivation. These efforts are helping improve the economic condition of farmers and strengthening India's pulse production and food security.

#### References

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