

About Us

A Corn Plant Can Be Fun To Work With

A few years ago, Bob and Joe started to look at populations of native corn that might contain some natural tolerance to corn borers and root worms. Their thinking was that the object of growing corn was to get a good crop, not necessarily kill every bug. Thousand of corn plants, most with tropical backgrounds were infested with live corn borers and root worm eggs. The most promising individual selections were increased prepared for yield trials. So what do we have to show for these efforts?

Example of susceptible line and a after several generations of successive infesting and selection. Each plant was infested with 50 to 75 live corn borer larvae. The plant on the left was severely stunted while the plant on the right was unaffected. Absent the corn borers. survive root worm pressure. both plants would be the same height

Knowledge

We gained new respect for the time and money it requires to deliver a corn plant that makes more yield and kills bugs at the same time. From splitting thousands of our stalks and comparing them with commercial lines we gained an appreciation for the time and effort required to produce plants that add both yield and corn borer resistance. The same can be said about our search for a level of tolerance to root worms. Years of infesting with root worm eggs followed by hundreds of root evaluations has isolated a family that we call "Rooty". It seems that Rooty has something that the root worms don't like and its roots look to survive root worm pressure. Our project continues but we have no break-through announcements. The originators of plants that control insects are to commended for their efforts. It is a long, expensive road and are justly rewarded for their efforts. Our corn project has provided us with a wealth of practical insect and plant health observations that allow us to quickly identify inbreds that have the yield, plant health and insect traits that make the hybrids.