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Monitoring and getting started

In previous chapters we have discussed the importance of correctly identifying pests as the starting point of any IPM strategy. We stress again that it is here that good control begins. We also want to highlight the fact that incorrect identification of pests can lead to massive mistakes and inappropriate control measures being applied.

What to look for

The first signs of pest problems are often symptoms of damage rather than observations of large numbers of pests. At this point it is important to recognise that several different causes may lead to almost identical damage and so it is necessary to work out at each site just what is causing the damage (see Figure 7.1, page 64). Remember, too, that more than one damaging cause could be present at the same time. For example, a canola crop could have slugs, earwigs, birds and tenebrionid beetles causing identical damage at the same time. We need to work out for each site which of these are the primary target (usually one or two), or whether all need treating (unusual but possible).

In the following section we look at the relative impact of several pests on the same crop. We planted canola seeds in pots and put different pests into those pots at different stages of the plants' growth (with the seed or five days later). The photos here show the different impact that the different species have on the same stage of plant growth. Essentially, this shows that the impact of one individual adult pest is not equal and that this needs to be considered when evaluating the pest status of different species. We are suggesting that the relative damage caused