2026 Corn Rootworm Field Observations in Central New York

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At a glance:

4	23	2000+	Jul 20-Aug 27
Counties	**Fields scored**	**Documented acres**	**Observation window**

Summary of the 2026 Corn rootworm injury assessment in Central NY. Acreage is an approximate aggregate across the affected fields, as reported by growers

Lodging observed in a corn rootworm-affected field near Auburn, Cayuga County, during the 2026 season. Photo: Nick Peters.

What was observed

Severe corn rootworm damage is being observed in multiple continuous corn fields in Central New York in 2026. Unexpected root node injury and goosenecking were observed across 22 fields in Onondaga, Cortland, Cayuga, and Madison Counties. Mean node injury scores at the town level ranged from 1.65 to 2.33 based on the Iowa State 0–3 scale (Oleson et al. 2005). A score of 1.0 represents one root node destroyed. A score of 2.0 represents two root nodes destroyed. A score of 3.0 represents three root nodes destroyed. Injury to each root node may correspond to approximately 15% yield loss.

Bt traits confirmed include AMXT, Qrome, Vorceed, and Duracade Viptera technology in the scored fields, which also reported medium-to-high rates of neonicotinoid seed treatment. These observations document injury but, by themselves, do not determine resistance or establish the cause of reduced control. Growers with continuous corn should document root injury, lodging, scout for adults, and establish a plan to manage rootworm pressure in 2027.

Table 1. 2026 corn rootworm node injury observations by town.

Town	County	Fields	Mean Injury	Source
Auburn	Cayuga	1	2.05	Cornell Entomology
Scipio	Cayuga	8	1.65	Pioneer
Venice	Cayuga	4	2.13	Pioneer
Preble	Cortland	4	1.86	Pioneer + Cornell CCE
Munnsville	Madison	3	2.20	Cornell Entomology
Skaneateles	Onondaga	1	2.04	Cornell Entomology
Tully	Onondaga	2	2.33	Pioneer

Management context

The common thread across many affected fields is repeated corn production, which increases the risk of corn rootworm pressure. These 2026 observations support renewed attention to scouting, rotation, resistance stewardship, and diversified management. Additional scientific testing is needed before attributing injury in any field to resistance.

The following inputs were reported by growers for the scored fields. This information is included for completeness of the record and does not characterize product performance.

- **Seed treatment (all scored fields):** All fields scored with high corn rootworm damage reported having used a neonicotinoid seed treatment; most of these fields reported using a high-rate neonicotinoid seed treatment option.
- **Soil-applied insecticide at planting**: no grower with a reported field used a soil-applied insecticide at planting on the scored fields.
- **At-plant rootworm deterrent (subset of scored fields)**: one grower reported using an at-plant rootworm deterrent product on their scored fields. This product is a rootworm deterrent, not an insecticide.
- **Foliar insecticide (subset of scored fields)**: a subset of fields was reported to have received a foliar insecticide application in-season.

Field photographs

Aerial photograph, Scipio (Cayuga Co.), 2026 season. Photo: Ben Rogers.

Aerial photograph, Tully (Onondaga Co.), 2026 season. Photo: Ben Rogers.

Left: Lodged corn plants in an affected field. (Photo: Marcelo Dimase.) Right: Close-up photograph of a heavily injured root system from an assessed field, 2026 season. (Photo: Ben Rogers.)

Left: Corn plants with varying levels of “goosenecking” and root pruning collected from an affected field. Right: In-field immunoassay trait test strip run on plant samples from an assessed field, 2026 season. (Photos: Marcelo Dimase.)

Left: Adult western corn rootworm (WCR) on corn silks. Gravid female WCR with eggs. (Photos: Marcelo Dimase.)

What growers should do

- Scout fields for lodging and adult beetles, especially fields with several consecutive years of corn.
- Dig and wash roots where injury is suspected and document the extent of root pruning.
- Record hybrid/trait package, seed treatment, field history, and any at-plant or foliar insecticide use.
- Prioritize crop rotation out of corn in fields with substantial injury. Rotation remains a key tool for New York rootworm management.
- Where continuous corn will remain, use multiple management tactics and avoid relying repeatedly on a single control approach.

Changes in pesticide registrations occur constantly and human errors are possible. Read the label before applying any pesticide. The label is the law. No endorsement of companies is made or implied.