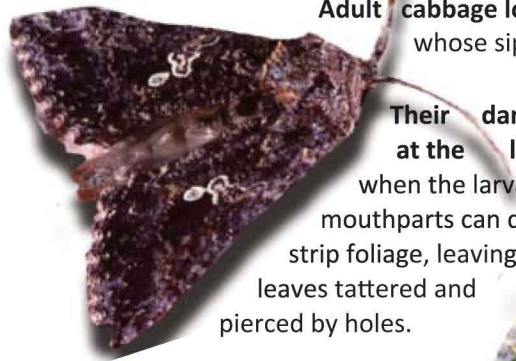


Cabbage Loopers

— *Garden pests whose larvae feast on the leaves of a broad range of vegetable and ornamental plants – not just cabbages.*



Adult cabbage loopers are brown moths with **4-inch wingspans** whose siphoning mouthparts draw nectar from flowers.

Their damage is done at the larval stage, when the larvae's chewing mouthparts can quickly strip foliage, leaving leaves tattered and pierced by holes.

Cabbage is only one of the plants whose leaves they eat.

Broccoli, lettuce, beets, tomatoes, kale and nasturtiums are among their numerous targets.

Cabbage looper larvae, as long as **2 inches,** get the looping part of their name from the motion their larvae make while crawling.



Cabbage Loopers: *Trichoplusia ni*

You're much more likely to notice a cabbage looper larva – a green caterpillar with white stripes – than an adult *T. ni* moth, which is active at night.

Eggs (smooth, green and slightly flat) may be laid on either the top or undersides of leaves. Larvae hatch in about three days and pass through several stages, or instars, over several weeks. In the pupa stage, they form a greenish/brownish cocoon attached to the plant.

The voracious larvae feed on many plants including beets, broccoli, lettuce, cabbages, kale, parsley, peas, potatoes, soybeans, spinach, tomatoes and ornamentals like nasturtiums and carnations.

MANAGEMENT TECHNIQUES:

- 1) Keep the surrounding area clear of weeds**, which can also serve as host plants.
- 2) If only a few caterpillars are found**, pick them by hand.
- 3) Biological agents in the form of *Bacillus thuringiensis* (*Bt*)-based powders and sprays** have proven effective in controlling cabbage loopers.
- 4) Use of chemical insecticides** is questionable, since they can stimulate insecticide resistance in cabbage loopers.

For more information, including use of insecticide treatments, scan the QR code at right or go to aggiehorticulture.tamu.edu and search for "cabbage looper."

For information on best use of pesticides, search for "integrated pest management."

