



*Vegetables*

# Cabbage Looper

Pest **11**  
Fact  
Sheet

**Introduction**

This North American native is found throughout the US, Canada and Mexico. It attacks all plants of the cabbage family, as well as lettuce, spinach, beets, peas, celery, parsley, potato and some flower varieties



**Description**

The larva of the cabbage looper, *Trichoplusia ni* Hübner, is a small, green caterpillar with a thin white- to-yellow stripe on each side of the body and two stripes down the center of the back. It has three pairs of legs near the head and three pairs of club-shaped legs (prolegs) on the abdomen. The area between these legs humps into a loop during movement, giving the insect its name. The adults are about an inch long and gray-brown in color with a 1½" wing span. The middle of the front of each wing has a silvery spot that resembles a figure 8 .

**Life cycle**

The cabbage looper does not overwinter outdoors in NH. It flies up from the south as early as mid-July, but often not until mid to late August. This accounts for the overlapping of stages in NH.

Once the adult reaches NH, eggs are laid singly on the upper surfaces of the host plant. Each female lays 275-350 eggs. Upon hatching, the larva immediately feeds upon the host plant and completes development in 2-4 weeks. Pupation also occurs on the host plant. The pupa can be found enclosed in a network of white threads on the host plant. The adult then emerges in 2 weeks. This cycle occurs 2-3 times per season.

**Control**

Growers usually begin spraying for cabbage looper as soon as they see eggs and larvae on plants. For adequate control, make sure spray covers the entire crop. Typically, growers must make several applications to achieve good looper control. Consult your county Extension Educator (see county office telephone listing on reverse side) for specific pesticide recommendations.

**Summary**

Damaging stage	Larva
Plant parts attacked	Leaves and vegetables
Overwintering Stage	Does not overwinter in New Hampshire, flies north from the south.
Number of generations per year	Usually 1 - 2
Time of year when most damage is done	July - October
Number of applications per year	3 - 9

## UNH Cooperative Extension County Office Telephone Numbers

<b>Belknap</b> (603) 527-5475	<b>Carroll</b> (603) 539-3331	<b>Cheshire</b> (603) 352-4550	<b>Coos</b> (603) 788-4961	<b>Grafton</b> (603) 787-6944
<b>Hillsborough</b> Goffstown (603) 641-6060	<b>Merrimack</b> (603) 796-2151	<b>Rockingham</b> Brentwood, NH 03833 (603) 679-5616	<b>Strafford</b> (603) 749-4445	<b>Sullivan</b> (603) 863-9200

**Stop!** It is always the pesticide applicator's responsibility, by law, to read and follow all current label directions for the specific pesticide being used. If unsure of registration status of a particular pesticide product, contact the NH Division of Pesticide Control at (603) 271-3550. Store pesticides in their original containers in a locked cabinet or shed away from food. Dispose of unused pesticides or empty containers safely, according to NH regulations. If you suspect pesticide poisoning, call the New Hampshire Poison Control Center at 1-800-562-8236.



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