



COMMUNITY EDUCATION GARDENING & AGRICULTURE CABBAGE WORMS & CABBAGE CATERPILLARS

GARDENING & AGRICULTURE + HEALTHY COOKING & EATING + STEAM & MORE

There are several caterpillars that attack cabbage family plants. They can be very destructive, eating large holes in leaves, making crops like kale and collards inedible.

Two common cabbage worms are from the Cabbage White Butterfly and the Cabbage Looper Moth.



Cabbage Butterfly



Cabbage Looper Moth

THINGS TO LOOK FOR & SOLUTIONS FOR YOUR GARDEN

Look for caterpillars on the undersides of leaves, though they can be found anywhere on plants. Most types of cabbage caterpillars are green. Consider any caterpillars on Cabbage family plants to be destructive, and remove them.

- Caterpillars may be as tiny as ¼ inch to an inch long
- Most species of cabbage worms walk like inch worms, called loopers
- Eggs are pale cream to yellow on most species and may be single or in masses of many eggs
- The cabbage white pupa is a green cocoon attached to the underside of leaves
- The looper pupa covers itself with webbing on the underside of leaves

A natural biological control is a bacterium, *Bacillus thuringiensis*, (Bt), which causes caterpillars to stop feeding without disrupting other populations of beneficial insects on cabbage

- **Warning:** Use Bt only on the target plants in cabbage family as it kills all caterpillars

Mechanical controls are the safest

- Row covers are a fabric covering that allows light and water, but prevents moths and butterflies from laying eggs
- Inspect plants, especially undersides of plants, and removing all eggs, caterpillars and pupas

Plants potentially damaged by cabbage caterpillars (short list):

- all cabbage family
- Chinese cabbage
- radish
- turnips
- beets
- chard
- celery
- lettuce
- spinach

Sources: http://entnemdept.ufl.edu/creatures/veg/leaf/cabbage_looper.htm

For more information on No More Empty Pots Community Education programs, contact us at education@nmepomaha.org or visit us at www.nmepomaha.org.

