



# Fact sheet

Insect Pests of the Home Garden Series

## Cross-Striped Cabbageworm

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Adult cross-striped cabbageworm and egg mass.  
(L. Kok, VT).



Cross-striped cabbageworm.

### Injury:

Broccoli, cauliflower, cabbage, turnips, collards, and related crops are attacked. Larvae eat large, oval-shaped holes in the leaves, preferring the tender, central leaves and terminal buds, and often burrow into the developing cabbage heads. Leaves, buds, and small heads become riddled with holes, which destroys their value for either market or table. Cross-striped cabbageworm can be a significant problem in the home garden, where a limited number of plants are grown, as damage is frequently severe on several consecutive plants within a row.

### Description:

The adult cross-striped cabbageworm, *Evergestis rimosalis* (Guenée) is a light, yellowish-brown moth with a wingspan of about 1 inch. The front wings are

pale yellow and marked with an indistinct zigzag brownish line overspreading a brown mottling; the hind wings are nearly transparent and whitish, with a row of 5 or 6 small dusky spots halfway between the middle of the wing and its border. Eggs are light yellow, rounded ovals about 1/20 inch in diameter, deposited in circular masses of 20–30 eggs on the undersides of leaves. The egg masses are flattened and overlap much like the shingles of a roof. The newly hatched larva is a small gray caterpillar with black tubercles. Mature larvae are about 6/10 inch long, bluish-gray above with tiny distinct transverse black stripes, three or more to each segment. On each side of the body there is a black stripe with a yellow stripe underneath it. The underside of the larva is green, mottled with yellow. The pupa is light to darkish brown enclosed within a tight cocoon with bits of dirt and sand incorporated into the outer surface.



## Life History:

The cross-striped cabbageworm overwinters in the pupal stage just below the surface of the soil and emerges in late spring. Females deposit eggs on the leaves, which hatch in 6–8 days. Larvae mature in 30–45 days, depending on temperature, and descend to the ground to pupate for 10 days or more. There are 2–3 generations per year.

## Management of Cross-Striped Cabbageworm:

1. Hand-picking of egg masses and larvae is effective, although time consuming. Be sure to destroy the worms because they can migrate back to the plant if just knocked onto the soil.
2. Plants can be covered with cheesecloth or a floating row cover immediately after transplanting to prevent egg laying.
3. Destroy or plow under all plant residues related to the cole crops as soon as the crop is harvested.
4. Parasites, predators, and parasitoid wasps help control cross-striped cabbageworms. Planting a nectar source (such as sweet alyssum) nearby for beneficial insects may help. Also, if pesticides are used, select a Bt product (one that has the insect bacterium Bacillus thuringiensis) as the primary pesticide as this will help preserve natural enemies. If a pesticide is used, thorough coverage of foliage is important for best results.
5. Read and follow all label directions, restrictions, and precautionary statements. Days to harvest after last application vary depending on crop and pesticide—refer to label for appropriate time intervals.

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Revised: July 2005

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NEW BRUNSWICK**

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