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Spinach: Loopers

Use *Integrated Pest Management (IPM)* for successful plant problem management.

Biology

Loopers are green caterpillars up to about 1-1/2" in length. They may have pale or dark stripes along the body. They are distinguished by their characteristic looping or "measuring-worm" movement. Loopers feed on leaves of many plants, chewing holes in the leaves or feeding along leaf margins. The adult moth of the cabbage looper, one common species, is gray-brown and has a silvery spot on each forewing. Cocoons of this species can often be found attached by one side to leaves. The alfalfa looper moth is mottled brown, with silver markings. Both species have a wingspan of about 1-1/2". Eggs are laid on leaves of host plants.

Management Options

Non-Chemical Management

- ~ Cover crops with floating row covers or screen cages after planting to prevent egg-laying by adults.
- ~ Hand-pick and destroy any caterpillars or cocoons found on leaves.
- ~ Natural enemies of caterpillars include predacious beetles, parasitic wasps, and birds. Avoid use of broad-spectrum insecticides when possible to conserve beneficial insects.

Select non-chemical management options as your first choice!

Chemical Management

IMPORTANT: Visit *Home and Garden Fact Sheets* for more information on using pesticides

Apply according to label instructions when larvae or damage are observed. Apply Bt only when caterpillars are feeding. Use a spreader-sticker with liquid Bt formulations.

Listed below are examples of pesticides that are legal in Washington. Always read and follow all label directions.

- ~ Bonide Captain Jack's Deadbug Brew R-T-U [Organic]
 - active ingredient: spinosad (spinosyn A+D)
 - EPA reg no: 4-472
- ~ Bonide Thuricide BT Conc
 - active ingredient: *Bacillus thuringiensis subsp. kurstaki*
 - EPA reg no: 4-226
- ~ Bug Buster-O [Organic]
 - active ingredient: pyrethrins
 - EPA reg no: 1021-1771-54705
- ~ Bull's-Eye Bioinsecticide
 - active ingredient: spinosad (spinosyn A+D)
 - EPA reg no: 62719-314-56872
- ~ ferti-lome Dipel Dust
 - active ingredient: *Bacillus thuringiensis subsp. kurstaki*
 - EPA reg no: 7401-290
- ~ Naturalis L
 - active ingredient: *Beauveria bassiana*
 - EPA reg no: 53871-9
- ~ Safer Brand BioNEEM Multi-Purpose Insecticide & Repellent Conc [Organic]
 - active ingredient: azadirachtin
 - EPA reg no: 70051-6-42697
- ~ Safer Brand Caterpillar Killer/Trees, Shrubs, & Vegetables Conc
 - active ingredient: *Bacillus thuringiensis subsp. kurstaki*
 - EPA reg no: 42697-23
- ~ Safer Brand Garden Dust RTU [Organic]
 - active ingredient: *Bacillus thuringiensis subsp. kurstaki*

- EPA reg no: 36488-25-42697

~ This list may not include all products registered for this use.

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Images



~ Caption: Alfalfa looper and damage
~ Photo by: A.L. Antonelli



~ Caption: Alfalfa looper
~ Photo by: A.L. Antonelli



~ Caption: Alfalfa looper adult
~ Photo by: OSU slide library