

Cross-Striped Cabbageworms

(*Evergestis rimosalis*)



Figure 1. Cross-striped cabbageworm.

Evergestis rimosalis (Guenée) (Lepidoptera: Crambidae), more commonly known as the **cross-striped cabbageworm** (CSCW), feeds on a wide range of brassica crops. Some common examples include broccoli, cabbage, collards, kale, turnips, and bok choy.

CSCW larvae are bluish-gray on top and green underneath. The larva gets its name “cross-striped” from the numerous black bands across its back and along the full length of its body (Figures 1 and 2B). On each side of the larva run black and yellow lines from head to anus. The larva’s body is covered with numerous hairs (setae) that are visible up close.

Adult moths are yellowish-brown (straw-like) to brown with dark zigzag markings on the forewing and a wingspan of about 1 inch (2.5 cm; Figure 2C). Adult females deposit eggs in clusters of up to 30 on the undersides of leaves. Adults are active at night and usually unnoticed. As such, infestations usually start in a general location and move outward to the rest of the crop.

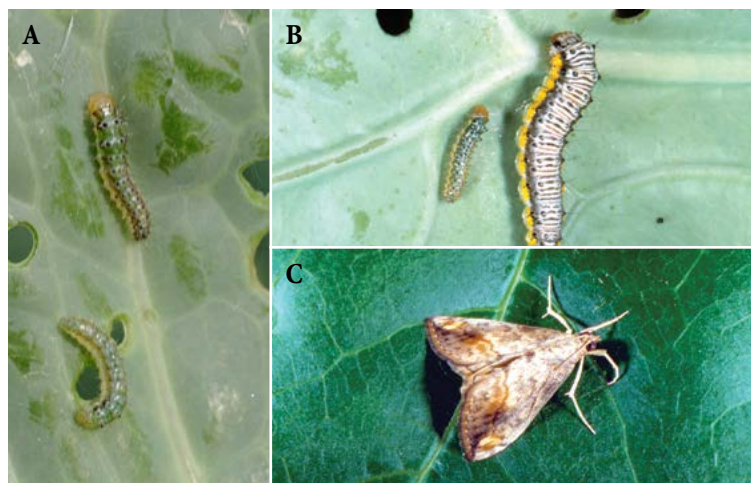


Figure 2. Cross-striped cabbageworm larvae (CSCW). A) Young CSCW larvae. Credit: Clemson University – USDA Cooperative Extension Slide Series, Bugwood.org. B) Side-by-side CSCW larval instars (left, young larva; right, mature larva). Photo by L. Buss, University of Florida/IFAS, Department of Entomology and Nematology. C) Adult CSCW. Photo by J. Capinera, University of Florida/IFAS, Department of Entomology and Nematology.

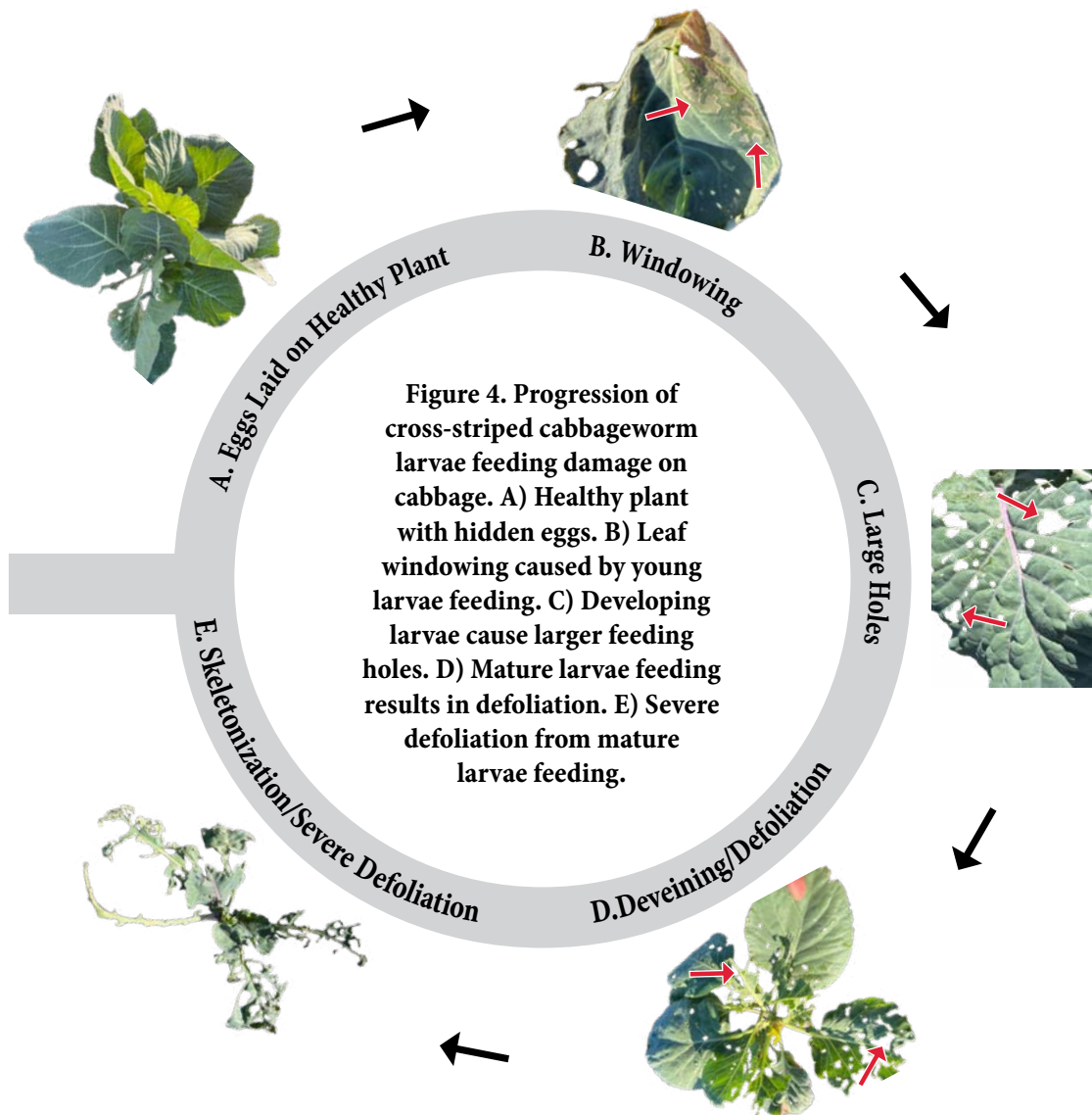
Eggs are about 0.05 inches (1.2 mm) long by 0.04 inches (0.9 mm) wide, and clusters are yellow, scale-like, and fuzzy in appearance. Larvae emerge from the egg in 2 to 12 days depending on temperature (warm and cool, respectively).

Once emerged, larvae grow up to ¾ inch (19 mm) long across four instars in 2 to 3 weeks (Figures 2A and 2B). Afterward, larvae drop to the ground to pupate just below the soil surface in a tight cocoon. There are at least two to three generations per year in the southern states; however, this insect pest now occurs beyond the traditional southern states.

CSCW populations can occur during the spring and fall when brassicas are typically grown (cole crops/spring greens). In heavy infestations, older caterpillars severely skeletonize/defoliate leaves, feeding on all the tender parts (Figures 3 and 4). CSCW larvae have a strong preference for terminal buds and ultimately destroy them. In some cases, larvae are seen burrowing into the center of developing heads. The most common sign and symptom of CSCW injury is tender young leaves and buds riddled with holes (Figure 3).



Figure 3. Cross-striped cabbageworm larva feeding.



Foliar insecticides that target caterpillars are often effective. However, other practices, such as overuse of nitrogen fertilizers, should be avoided because they are directly related to increases in larval populations. Increased nitrogen

use leads to more leaf growth, which also provides fresher (tender young) leaf tissue for CSCW feeding. Management options are listed in Table 1.

Table 1. Cross-striped cabbageworm management options.

Management option	Cross-striped cabbageworm life stage		
	Adults	Larvae*	Eggs
Scouting method (weekly to twice weekly)	Light traps at night	• 25 random plants • Check heads and leaves • Look for frass	Check undersides of leaves
Row covers	Limits adult oviposition	–	Reduces the number of eggs laid
Natural enemies** (parasitoids, predators, parasitic microorganisms)	Attacks life stage	Attacks life stage	Attacks life stage
Biopesticides*** (e.g., <i>Bacillus thuringiensis</i> (Bt))	–	Foliar sprays	–
Insecticides*** (lepidoptera/caterpillar-targeting chemistries; e.g., spinosad, diamides, organophosphates, oxadiazines)	–	• Foliar sprays • Soil drench (specific insecticides; check the label)	

*Recommended life stage target and management method.

**Depends on natural enemy species.

***Use pesticides safely. **Always read the label.**

Please report and submit any **cross-striped cabbageworm** samples to the [MSU Extension Entomology Insect Identification Laboratory](#).

References

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