UCONN
COLLEGE OF AGRICULTURE, HEALTH AND NATURAL RESOURCES
EXTENSION

Vegetable Pest Alert

June 24, 2023

Squash vine borers are active**.** They lay their eggs on the base of cucurbit plants. Summer and winter squashes, pumpkins are hosts; cucumber, watermelon, and butternut are not hosts. Once larvae have bored inside the stem, insecticide application will have little control. So, application should be applied with the first sight of adult activity.

They can be monitored by using Scentry Heliothis pheromone trap. Threshold for spraying is 5 moths/trap for crowning cucurbits and 12 moths/trap for vining cucurbits. Treat base of stems thoroughly to target hatching larvae. Some selective materials used for other caterpillars in squash, such as spinosyns and *Bacillus thuringiensis* aizawi, have demonstrated efficacy in trials. See New England Vegetable Management Guide for spray options.

Squash vine borer adult (above) and egg laid singly on the stem of a cucurbit (photo credit: Alan Eaton, University of New Hampshire Cooperative Extension)

European corn borer (ECB) is a resident pest for us and is now being captured in traps in the region. Sweet corn is one of over 200 crop and weed host plants of this pest; other vegetable crops affected include pepper, bean, and potato. Larvae overwinter in stalks of corn and other host plants and pupate in the spring.

ECB flight can be monitored with 3 Scentry Heliothis net traps baited with either a New York E, Iowa Z, or hybrid lure, placed at least 50' apart in weedy borders of corn fields with the bottom at weed height. The third type, hybrid ECB has been captured in the last few years. So, growers in CT should also monitor this pest. Once flight is detected, corn with newly emerging tassels should be scouted weekly for the presence of ECB larvae by inspecting the tassels of 50 to 100 plants, in groups of 5 to 20 plants throughout the field. Treat if more than 15% of the plants have one or more larvae present. This week 1 ECB NY (E) moth and none of others was captured in a trap set in Berlin, CT. And, the infestation in the field was 2%.

Corn earworm (CEW) moths migrate annually into the Northeast, traveling north on storm fronts, and may arrive anytime from late June through September. But this year, they are flying early as they are being captured in traps in the region. CEW feeds in a wide range of crops and among vegetables its favorite crops are corn and tomato (hence it is also known as 'tomato fruitworm').

Table. Spray Intervals for Corn Earworm based on moth captures in Heliothis net traps.

Moths/Night	Moths/Week	Spray Interval
0 - 0.2	0 - 1.4	no spray
0.2 -0.5	1.4 - 3.5	6 days
0.5 - 1	3.5 – 7	5 days
1 - 13	7 – 91	4 days
Over 13	Over 91	3 days

Corn earworm, photo by D. Ferro

Fourlined plant bug has an extensive host range, feeding on over 250 species of plants including vegetables including cucurbits, potatoes, and peppers, and herbs such as mint and basil, and ornamental plants. The associated damage consists of spots that look similar to fungal disease spot. Damage is inflicted by the bug's piercing-sucking mouthparts and is usually not severe enough to cause plant death.

Fourlined plant bug feeding damage on basil plant.
Photos by Angela Mia Colasuonno, Lathrop Farmstead, Lebanon, CT.

The use of a trap crop is can keep the four-lined plant bug away from the crop. Mint is highly attractive to this pest and can be effectively used as a trap crop. But mint can self-propagate and take over the plot over the years. Planting them in a confined space or container can control that.

Insecticidal soaps and horticultural oils can be sprayed to control this pest. Also, if it is feasible, handpicking the eggs is effective.

Continue to be on the lookout for the following pests that were covered in the previous pest alerts (2023):

- **Imported cabbageworm**
- **Potato leafhopper**
- **Squash bugs**
- **Colorado potato beetles**
- **Striped cucumber beetles**
- **Onion thrips**
- **Solanaceous flea beetles**
- **Brassica flea beetles**

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