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How To Conquer Caterpillars

By James Kilkelly

Butterflies, especially the colourfully marked types are very pretty to watch as they undulate through the summer breezes but there are certain varieties that can cause losses in your vegetable garden.

The cabbage white butterfly

The main culprit is the cabbage white butterfly which is mostly attracted to a chemical emitted from the leaves of brassicas. The brassica group covers such vegetables as cabbage, brussels sprouts, broccoli and cauliflower. The butterfly lands on these plants and in itself is harmless but the eggs it deposits are the problem, or what eventually emerges from these eggs. Emerging quite soon after are the dreaded caterpillars which are hairy and about 3 to 4 cm long.

Caterpillars

Caterpillars are the larvae or the young of the butterfly; this is the main feeding and growth stage of the butterflies' life cycle. As most vegetable growers know caterpillars are very hungry and a small handful can turn a head of cabbage into a skeleton within a day or two. Infested leaves are quite toxic to animals and humans even if washed thoroughly.

Control methods

So how can you battle against the caterpillars, well there are various chemical and organic methods. The chemical methods are available in all good garden centres in the form of sprays, dusts and bug guns with names too numerous to mention. With cabbage, broccoli etc being food crops that you may grow at home organically to avoid chemicals you should try to tackle the menace organically. Cover your plants with sheer netting whilst the butterflies are around, if they cannot touch the plants then they cannot lay their eggs on them. Ensure the netting allows sufficient sunlight through to enable growth.

Companion plants

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Try planting tomatoes and celery as companion plants close by as their scents tend to cancel out the scent emitted by brassicas therefore deterring cabbage white butterflies. Finally if all else fails try sending your cat or cats on holiday during the summer, you'll be surprised how many songbirds start to visit your garden. Songbirds just love caterpillars.

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<http://www.gardenplansireland.com/>

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Article location:

<http://www.gardenplansireland.com/articles/article27.html>

Bugs That Are Beneficial For Gardening

By Robert Michael

1. The aphid midge look like a small wasp and are very delicate. There are over sixty different varieties of aphids and larvae will eat these out of your garden. If you want to attract them then grow plants with a great deal of nectar and pollen.
2. The big-eyed bug is a quick moving bug with huge eyes and tiny black spots on its head and thorax. Field crops and orchards are usually where these bugs are found. Leafhoppers, spider mites, plant bugs and aphids and small caterpillars are what the big-eyed bugs eat.
3. Ladybugs come in sizes ranging from 1/16 to 3/8 inch and have circular red, orange or yellow trunks with black markings. Where large amounts of pollen and nectar-producing flower are that is where you will find ladybugs. Aphids, mealybugs, small insects and scales are the ladybugs favorites. The ladybug is related to the Mexican bean beetle but they are beneficial.
4. The minute pirate bugs are about 1/4 inches long as adults and have a black and white pattern on their body. Like the big-eyed bug they are fast moving and like gardens with goldenrod, yarrow, alfalfa, daisies, and other pollen-producing, flowering plants are grown. Small caterpillars, thrips, spider mites, insect eggs and immature leafhoppers are what the Minute Pirate Bugs eat.
5. The Mealybug Destroyer have wing covers that are black and as an adult this bug is 1/3 inch long with an oval shaped body and a coral-colored stomach. The mealybug destroyer is naturally there if mealybugs are present and the destroyers will eat all of the mealybugs in the garden.
6. An adult spined soldier bug is about 1/2 inch in length when it reaches adulthood. The shoulders of

How To Conquer Caterpillars

the thorax come to sharp points and are grayish brown in color. They prefer to feed on caterpillars, armyworms, grubs, sawflies, and Mexican bean beetle larvae. The shelter of perennial plants near a garden are preferred by the spined soldier bug.

7. The tachinid fly look like a big, hairy housefly and grow to about 1/3 to 1/2 inch long. Eggs that kill caterpillars of many pest species such as gypsy moths and armyworms are deposited by the females. Flower nectar, sweet clover, parsley and dill are what adults prefer to feed on. If you see caterpillars with white eggs hooked to them, do not kill them because the eggs will turn into more tachinid flies.

8. Adult tiger beetles will be about 1/2 to 3/4 inches long. They are bright-colored, have long legs and feed on many types of pests. Tiger beetles will come if there are perennials in your garden.

9. The assassin bug look flattened and have elongated heads. This type of bug ranges from 1/2 to 1 3/8 inches long. The assassin bug is naturally found in a garden where pests live. They will eat almost any common pest.

10. An adult bumblebee will grow to be 1 inch long and are round with black and yellow striping. They can be recognized they their smoky-colored wings and hairy bodies. This bug pollinates and like nectar and pollen.

Try to attract helpful insects into your garden to get rid of those annoying and unwanted pests.

Robert Michael is a writer for Razo Gardening which is an excellent place to find gardening links, resources and articles. For more information go to:

<http://www.razogardening.com>



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