

Garden Insects

Some insects are very good at finding food and shelter in the garden. You will find many insects in this garden, but you must look carefully. Most are smaller than your pinkie nail!

Many insects are gardener's helpers because they eat other insects that harm their plants. To control insects, gardeners need to know what kind of insect they are dealing with, what plants it favors and what time of year to expect it. So the first thing gardeners must know to protect their plants is insect identification! This guide will help you name insects in the garden!

Common Vegetable Garden Pests



Blister beetle



Colorado potato beetle



Cowpea curculio



Spotted cucumber beetle



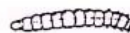
Flea beetle



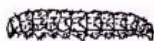
White grub



Leaf beetle



Wireworm



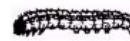
Armyworm



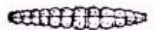
Cabbage looper



Cutworm



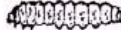
Corn earworm



Melonworm



Saltmarsh caterpillar



Squash vine borer



Tomato hornworm



Mole cricket



Aphid



Flea hopper



Leafhopper

Froghopper

Nymph



Adult



The froghopper, or spittle bug, is a small, brown insect that likes to eat new plants. They hold their wings together like a tent over their body. The Froghopper leaps into the record books as the world's greatest jumper. This tiny insect is only 0.2 inches (6 millimeters) in length but can jump 28 inches (70 centimeters) into the air. A human with this ability would be able to clear a 690-foot skyscraper!

In the nymph stage, the froghopper sucks out the sap from plants and then covers itself in its own spit! This froth, known as cuckoo spit, protects the froghopper from predators as it eats, and also stops it from drying out.

Japanese Beetle



It is about 1.5 cm (0.6 inches) long and 1 cm (0.4 inches) wide, with iridescent copper-colored elytra and green thorax and head. It is not very destructive in Japan, where it is controlled by natural enemies, but in America it is a serious pest of about 200 species of plants, including leaves of plants of the following crops: strawberries, tomatoes, peppers, grapes, hops, roses, cherries, plums, pears, peaches, raspberries, blackberries, corn, peas, and blueberries.

It is a clumsy flier, dropping several centimeters when it hits a wall. These insects damage plants by skeletonizing the foliage, that is, consuming only the leaf material between the veins.

The life cycle of the beetles is typically one year in most parts of the United States, but this can be extended in cooler climates. During the larval stage the white grubs can be identified by their V shaped raster pattern.

Squash Bug



The squash bug's favorite foods grow on a vine, like pumpkins and squash. This insect has piercing and sucking mouth parts they use to eat the leaves and stems of plants. A squash bug has a wide body that is usually grayish black with orange and brown stripes. Squash bugs spend most of their time around the base and stems of the plants and on the undersides of leaves.

Cucumber Beetle



The striped cucumber beetle is about 1/5 inch long, and has a black head and yellow-green wing covers with three black stripes. The orange-yellow eggs are laid near the base of plants. The cucumber beetle's favorite foods are squash, melon, pumpkin and of course, cucumber! Not only does this beetle eat a farmer's food, but it also spreads bacteria that cause the entire plant to wilt.



Colorado Potato Beetle

Larvae



Adult



The Colorado potato beetle is famous for its ability to eat vegetables in the nightshade family: potato, tomato, eggplants, and peppers. It is about a half an inch long, with a bright yellow/orange body and five bold stripes along each wing cover. An adult beetle attaches her orange eggs to the underside of leaves. When the eggs hatch, the larvae have a soft, red body with two rows of black spots on each side.

Adult beetles and their larvae can strip the plants of leaves and kill an entire crop! You can pick off the eggs, larva, or the adult beetles from the plant to help the farmers. Remember to search the underside of the leaves when looking for eggs!

Earwig



Earwigs are dark brown, with long, narrow bodies. They are about an inch in length and have long antennae. Like all insects, they have six legs that grow from their thorax. At the end of their abdomen is a pair of pinchers, called cerci, which they use to catch their prey and defend themselves against predators. Earwigs are nocturnal; they hide during the day and come outside at night. They can be found under piles of lawn clippings, compost or in tree holes. Earwigs like to eat leaves, flowers, fruit, mold and insects. They are especially fond of corn. Because they dig to find food and shelter, their feet look like little shovels!

Aphids



Aphids are very small (only a few millimeters long), soft-bodied insects. They have small eyes, and sucking mouthparts, like the Froghopper. They are often green, but may be red, black, or brown. They move slowly, and don't jump or hop. They usually have long antennae, which help it to smell fresh green plants. Aphids are almost always found on or near their food plants. They sometimes hide in the curls of leaves.

Beneficial Garden Insects

Thank these insects for helping out the farmers!



Ladybug



Praying Mantis



Lacewing



Dragonfly



Ground Beetle