

CATERPILLARS

Caterpillars of ornamental crops can be divided into three main groups, all of which consist of a number of different species: cutworms, leafrollers, and loopers.

Cutworms

Larvae have legs all the way down the abdomen, allowing for smoother movement. Adults are dull coloured moths, about 18 mm long. Larvae are up to 37 mm long, dull coloured, blackish, grey or brown, with shiny heads. Caterpillars feed at night and cut off plants at or just above the soil surface. They can also move up the plants, eating leaves and flowers. Eggs are normally deposited in clusters on single leaves, causing more localized infestations than loopers. More than one generation occurs per season, with larvae pupating in the soil and emerging from June to August.



Cutworms

Leafrollers

They are the larvae of small moths. These caterpillars fold or roll leaves together with silk and feed on the leaf within the shelter. Some species wriggle violently out of these shelters when disturbed.



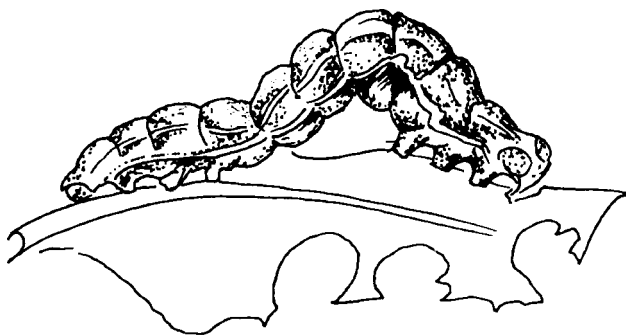
Leafroller larva

Loopers

Larvae have no legs in the mid-section of the body causing the characteristic looping during movement. Colouring may range from bright green to brown. The pearl-like eggs are laid by the moths or butterflies randomly throughout infested areas. Larvae emerge and immediately begin feeding; at first they skim the surface layer off the leaf, but as they grow, holes are cut into leaves and edges notched.



Cabbage Loopers



Cabbage looper larva

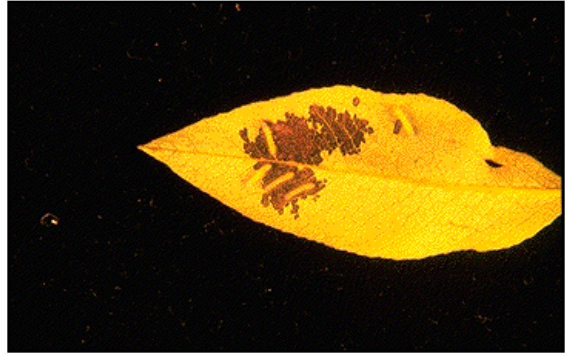


Green Looper Larvae

Specific Caterpillars

Apple and Thorn Skeletonizers (*Choreutis pariana*)

They overwinter as pupa (cocoon), adults emerge in spring to lay small green eggs under leaves. Caterpillars emerge and feed on the lower leaf under a covering of webbing, later moving to the upper leaf surface and tying the leaf edges together. In this 'cone', they skeletonize the upper leaf and produce up to 4 generations a year. The moth is a dark brown with a wingspread of approximately 11 mm. Caterpillars are 12 mm long and yellowish to greenish with many black dots all over the body.



Abies and Thorn Skeletonizer

Forest and Western Tent Caterpillars

(*Malacosoma disstria* and *M. Californicum*)

They have very similar in life cycles. In spring the eggs hatch and larvae move out to feed on flowers, buds, and foliage, usually in colonies. Western tent caterpillars form tent-like webs for protection, while forest tent caterpillars form a silken mat on the trunk or branches from which they move out and defoliate the host. They pupate in cocoons, emerging as tan coloured moths about midsummer. Females encircle twigs on the host tree with bands of eggs, which overwinter and hatch the following spring. Caterpillars are bluish-grey and have a prominent row of whitish diamond shaped dots along the back. Moths have a wingspread of up to 34 mm and are varying shades of buff brown.



Forest Tent Caterpillar Moth

B. Duncan

Hemlock Looper (*Lambdina fiscellaria*)

This pale yellow caterpillar has a black lateral band with white teardrop-shaped spots along its body. Young larvae feed on new foliage, but as they grow they also damage older foliage of hemlock and other conifers. Larvae pupate in late summer emerging in fall to lay overwintering eggs that hatch in spring.



Forest Tent Caterpillars

B. Duncan



Western Tent Caterpillar

B. Duncan

Hosts

Apple and Thorn Skeletonizer

- Betula*
- Crataegus*
- Malus*
- Prunus*
- Pyrus*
- Sorbus*

Loopers and Caterpillars

- Azalea*
- Chrysanthemum*
- Dianthus*
- Iris*
- Lathyrus*
- Nicotiana*
- Paeonia*
- Pelargonium* (geranium)
- Rosa*
- Senecio*
- Viola*

Forest Tent Caterpillars

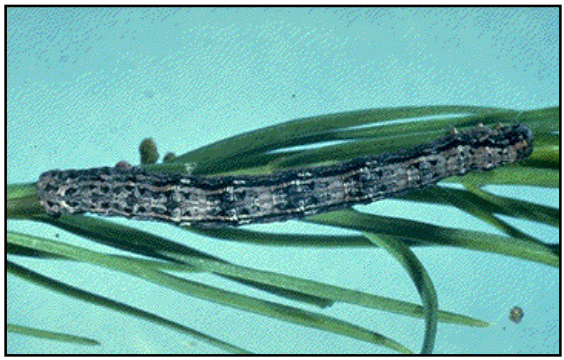
- Acer*
- Betula*
- Crataegus*
- Fraxinus*
- Liquidambar*
- Malus*
- Populus*
- Prunus*
- Quercus*
- Rosa*
- Salix*
- Tilia*
- Ulmus*

Leaf Rollers

- Abies*
- Azalea*
- Corylus*
- Dianthus*
- Larix*
- Malus*
- Picea*
- Prunus*
- Pyrus*
- Rosa*
- Tsuga*

Western Tent Caterpillars

- Alnus*
- Arbutus*
- Betula*
- Ceanothus*
- Cercis*
- Corylus*
- Crataegus*
- Fraxinus*
- Ilex*
- Malus*
- Populus*
- Prunus*
- Quercus*
- Salix*



Hemlock Looper (*Lambdista flugibrosa*)

B. Duncan