

BEET WEBWORM

by Eric Day

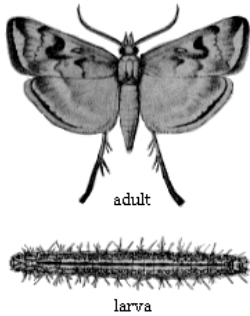


Fig. 1: Beet Webworm
life stages

DESCRIPTION: Caterpillar stage is yellow or green to almost black with a black stripe and numerous black spots on back and up to 1 and 1/4 inches long. The adult is a moth with wavy lines on its wings.

COMMON HOST PLANT(S): Beet, peas, potato and spinach.

DAMAGE: Eats leaves and buds of young plants. Rolls and folds leaves; ties them together with webs.

DISTRIBUTION: Throughout United States; especially troublesome in western states.

CULTURAL CONTROL: Destroy weeds in and surrounding garden, especially pigweed and lambsquarters, which may serve as alternate hosts for beet webworms. Clip off webbed leaves and destroy the caterpillars within them.

ORGANIC/BIOLOGICAL CONTROL: Pyrethrum spray or dust can be used but must be applied when caterpillars are young, before substantial webbing has been produced. The beet webworm's habit of enclosing itself in folded leaves protects it not only from insecticides but many natural enemies as well. *Bacillus thuringiensis* (2.0-3.0 tbsp in 1 gallon of water) can also be used.

CHEMICAL CONTROL: Treat with a registered insecticide when insects appear in damaging numbers; repeat as needed.