

# A Bug's Life

# Cabbage looper

*Trichoplusia ni*

## Fun facts

- Move in looping motion because middle part of body has no legs
- Eggs laid on undersurfaces of leaves
- Overwinter as pupae in leaf litter
- Several generations per year

## Host plants

- Crucifers, including cabbage, Brussel sprouts, broccoli, cauliflower, kale and others

## Identification

Damage: Irregular shaped holes on leaves, a lot of green frass

Caterpillar: Up to 1-1/2" long, light green color, visible segments, white stripe on each side, 2 thin stripes down back, tapered towards head

Pupa: Enclosed in white cocoon

Moth: Mottled brown moth, 1-1/2" wingspan, silver spot (resembles a sock) on forewing

## Management

- Scout early on underside of leaves
- Handpick mature caterpillars
- Install floating row covers
- Garden sanitation and fall clean up
- Best to control when larvae are small with insecticidal soap, spinosad or *Bacillus thuringiensis* (Btk)
- Can cause damage to young transplants, especially when other caterpillars contribute to damage



Photos: J. Green