

Cutworms

Family: Noctuidae

Variegated cutworm - *Peridroma saucia*, Black cutworm - *Agrotis ipsilon*
Bronzed cutworm - *Nephelodes minians*, Dingy cutworm - *Feltia jaculifera*

Fun facts

- Caterpillars can cut down young plants as they feed on stems
- Eggs laid in clusters on everything
- Overwinter as pupae in soil
- Several generations per year

Host plants

- Wide range of plants including cabbage, beans, carrot, corn, lettuce, tomato, potato, turfgrass and others

Identification

Damage: Defoliation of leaves, buds, fruit, especially tender tissues

Caterpillar: Up to 2" long, smooth, grayish-brown, C-shaped posture when disturbed, black bumps, various colors, some have spots

Moth: Generally have 1-1/2" wingspan, shades of gray, brown or black, some have spots

Management

- Look for plants cut near ground, but plant is left behind
- Handpick and remove caterpillars
- Install floating row covers*
- Physical barriers or cardboard collars
- Garden sanitation and fall clean up
- Organic options include *Bacillus thuringiensis* (Btk) when larvae are small and desiccant soil barrier of diatomaceous earth around stems



Photos: J. Green