A Bug's Life

Tobacco budworm (Chloridea virescens)

Fun facts
- Also known as geranium budworm
- Master of camouflage
- Overwinter as pupa in soil, but can survive indoors in containers

Host plants
- Caterpillars feed on geranium, petunia, nicotiana, verbena and aster

Identification
- **Damage**: Holes in buds and ragged flowers
- **Caterpillar**: Variable in color, based on host plant, small black dots on body, mature caterpillars may have stripes and 1.5" fully grown
- **Moth**: Pale green moth with 3 gray-brown parallel lines

Management
- Hand picking caterpillars at night
- Remove flower head and dispose
- Repot before bringing inside for winter, discard old soil
- Insecticides are not usually effective and conflict with pollinator conservation

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