

A Bug's Life Three-lined potato beetle

Lema daturaphila

Fun facts

- Injury to tomatillos can be severe, usually minor on potato and tomato
- Larvae cover themselves with excrement for protection
- Overwinter as adults in leaf litter

Host plants

- Tomatillo, potato, tomato and others in nightshade/Solanaceae family



Identification

Damage: Defoliation to leaves

Eggs: Yellow eggs, laid in groups on underside of leaves

Larva: Slug-like, brownish-gray, visible legs, black head, covered in frass

Beetle: 1/4" long, orange-yellow, 3 lengthwise black stripes, orange thorax with black spots



Management

- Usually found on weeds in garden
- Handpick beetles, remove eggs and larvae from leaves into soapy water
- Install floating row covers*
- Garden sanitation and fall clean up
- When needed, organic options include pyrethrins, neem oil and spinosad; synthetic options include carbaryl and permethrin



Photos: J. Green

*Row covers should be removed or pulled back when plants flower to allow for pollination