

EASY GARDENING... INSECT CONTROL

Charles L. Cole*

Many different kinds of insects feed on garden plants. Insect pests damage plants in two ways. First, they eat holes in the leaves, stems, roots or fruit. Second, they stick their beaks into the plants and suck out plant juices.

Insects attack garden plants at all times during the year. Some insects will feed on sprouting seed and young seedlings. Others feed on the growing plant, or on the mature plant and its fruit.

Kinds of Insects

The insects which feed on garden plants can be divided into two groups — the sucking insects and the chewing insects. See figure 1. Some of the most common insect pests and their damage are:

<u>Sucking Insects</u>	<u>Type of Damage</u>
Aphids	Suck juices from leaves and stems
Stink bugs	Suck juices from stems and fruit
Leafhoppers	Suck juices from leaves
Squash bugs	Suck juices from stems or vines
Whiteflies	Suck juices from underside of leaves
<u>Chewing Insects</u>	
Grasshoppers	Eat entire leaves
Potato beetles	Eat holes in potato and tomato leaves
Flea beetles	Eat very small holes in leaves
Cucumber beetles	Eat small holes in leaves
Armyworms	Eat large holes in leaves; may eat fruit
Cutworms	Cut off plants at or below ground
Cabbage loopers	Eat holes in cabbage, collards, broccoli
Corn earworms	Eat on tomatoes, ears of corn, peppers

Recognizing Insect Problems

A good gardener must learn to recognize insect problems. To know when insects are damaging your plants, watch for anything which does not look normal about your plants. The following symptoms will help you recognize insect problems.

1. Plants are stunted and do not grow properly.
2. Plants have deformed or damaged leaves.
3. Plants look yellow or light in color.
4. Plants look wilted and droopy.

*Area Extension entomologist, The Texas A&M University System

If your plants show any of these symptoms, examine each plant for insects.

Controlling Insects

You can control many insects without chemicals, but this *cultural control* requires more time and effort. It may result in slight damage to your plants. Some of the things you can do to prevent or control insect damage are:

1. Keep weeds and grass pulled out of the garden. Mow the area around the garden.
2. Plant varieties that grow well in your area.
3. Use the correct amount of fertilizer and water well when needed.
4. When you have picked all the fruit, remove or plow under old plants to destroy them. Do not allow them to stand in the garden.
5. You can wash off some insects, such as aphids and spider mites, with a water hose.
6. You may hand-pick some insects or egg masses from the plant to prevent damage.

Chemical control of insects often may be necessary. For best results, treat insects before large numbers build up in the garden. Dusts or sprays provide good control.

Before you buy a chemical, *read the label* to see if it is recommended for the pest and plants you want to treat.

Before you use a chemical, *read the label* to see how much you should use. Read all information on the label and follow all directions.

All insecticides are poisonous. Handle them with care. Keep all insecticides away from children.

Some insecticides recommended for use in the home vegetable garden are:

- | | |
|----------------------------------|-----------------|
| 1. <i>Bacillus thuringiensis</i> | 6. Malathion |
| 2. Diazinon | 7. Methoxychlor |
| 3. Dibrom | 8. Naled |
| 4. Endosulfan | 9. Sevin |
| 5. Kelthane | 10. Sulfur |

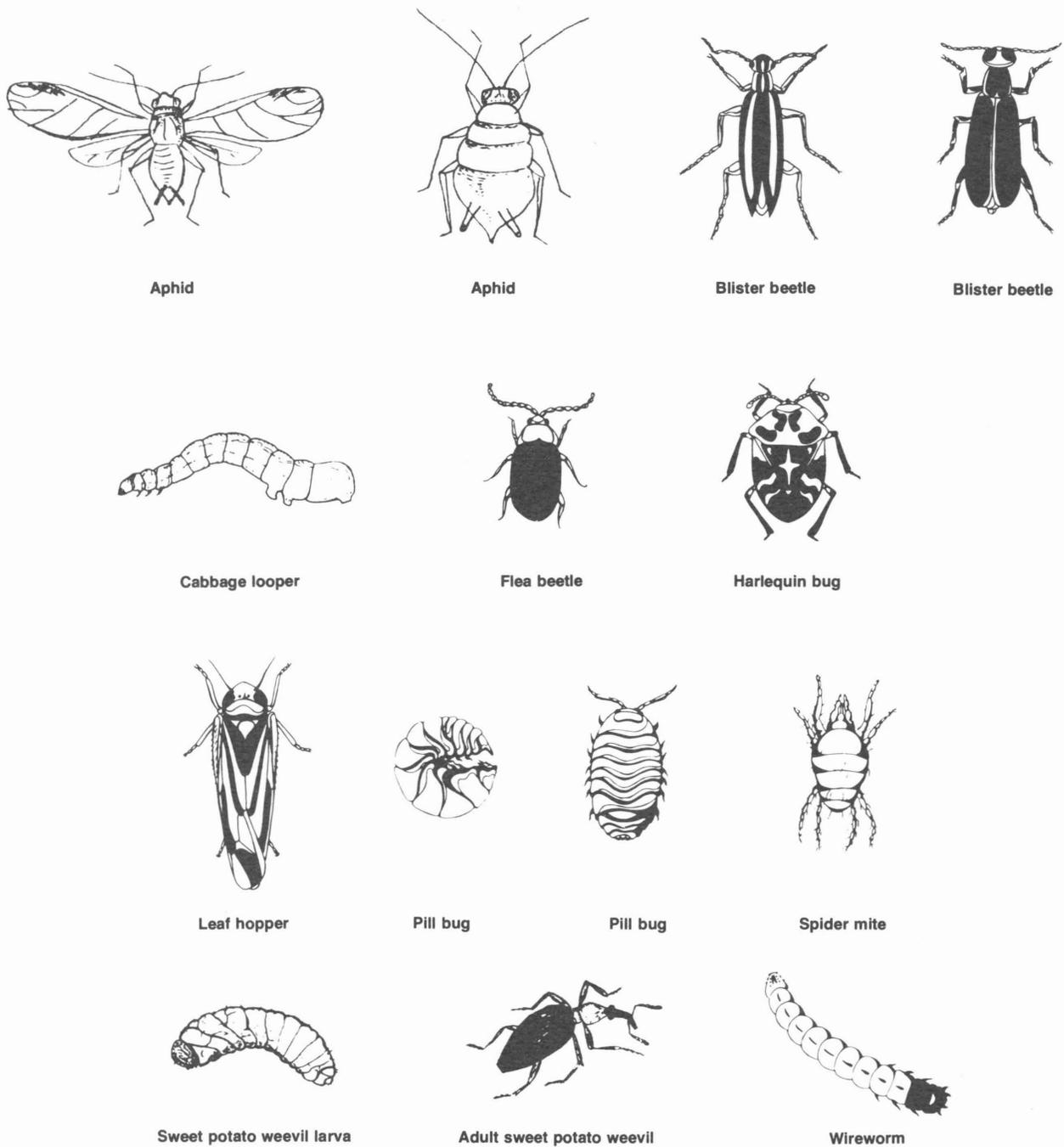


Figure 1. Some of the most common vegetable garden insects (Illustrations are not actual size.)

The information given herein is for educational purposes only. Reference to commercial products or trade names is made with the understanding that no discrimination is intended and no endorsement by the Cooperative Extension Service is implied.

Educational programs conducted by the Texas Agricultural Extension Service serve people of all ages regardless of socio-economic level, race, color, sex, religion or national origin.

Cooperative Extension Work in Agriculture and Home Economics, The Texas A&M University System and the United States Department of Agriculture cooperating. Distributed in furtherance of the Acts of Congress of May 8, 1914, as amended, and June 30, 1914.
25M — 10-79, Reprint ENT