



Vegetable Garden Insects Sheet 2 ¹

F.A. Johnson, D.E. Short and J.L. Castner²

- **Spider mites** (Plate 1). These pests are not insects but are closely related to spiders. Mites have piercing-sucking mouthparts and damage plants by penetrating the leaf cells and withdrawing the sap. Mites are very small, about 1/50" long, and are usually greenish or red. Mites feed on the lower leaf surfaces. Infested leaves become pale or dusty, and webs may be visible. Mites prefer hot, dry weather. Directing a stream of water from the garden hose on infested plants will aid in control.
- **Fall armyworms** (Plate 2). Caterpillars are about 1-1/2" long when fully grown. They usually have dark heads with a light, inverted Y-shaped mark. They are tan to green and feed on several plants including young corn whorls or ears, tomatoes, potatoes, cabbage, turnips, spinach and cucumbers.
- **Cabbage loopers** (Plate 3). Loopers are common caterpillar pests of the home garden. They are green, shaped somewhat like a baseball bat, and loop when they crawl. They grow to about 1-1/2" long and have two pairs of abdominal prolegs. Loopers generally feed on the undersides of leaves. Turn the leaves to expose the pests.
- **Imported cabbageworms** (Plate 4). Larvae are 1-1/4" long when mature, and velvety green. The adult butterflies are white with three or four black spots on their wings. The voracious caterpillars attack cabbage, cauliflower, collards, turnips and radishes. The outside leaves of cabbage and related plants are often riddled with irregular holes. Many greenish pellets (excrement) can be found in the angles of the leaves.
- **Squash bugs** (Plate 5). Adult bugs are brownish-black and about 5/8" long. The nymphs are whitish with black legs and are 3/16" to 1/2" long. The bugs tend to hide around the base of the plant or under leaves adjacent to the soil surface. The adults and nymphs suck the juices, causing leaves to wilt rapidly, and they also feed on the fruit. Squash bugs attack all the cucurbits or vine crops, but squash and pumpkins are favorite host plants.
- **Leaf-footed plant bug** (Plate 6). These insects are related to squash bugs. Adults are 5/8" to 3/4" long and are brown with a narrow white band across the back. Leaf-footed plant bugs have the same host plants as squash bugs, and damage them in the same way.

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2. F.A. Johnson, Professor; D.E. Short, Professor; J.L. Castner, Scientific Photographer; Department of Entomology and Nematology, Cooperative Extension Service, Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences, University of Florida, Gainesville, 32611. The term plates, where used in this document, refers to color photographs that can be displayed on screen from the FAIRS CD-ROM. These photographs are not included in the printed document.

- **Colorado potato beetles** (Plate 7). These are mainly pests of potatoes, eggplants, tomatoes and peppers. They usually are found north of the Tampa Bay area. The adults are about 3/8" long with alternating black and yellow stripes running lengthwise on their backs. Larvae are 1/2" long when mature, humpbacked and reddish with two rows of black spots on each side (Plate 8). Both adults and larvae feed on leaves and terminal growth. Larvae usually feed in groups, adults are scattered.

- **Mexican bean beetles** (Plate 9). These insects are found mainly in northern Florida, where they feed on the leaves of bean plants. The adults are 1/4" to 1/3" long and bronze with 16 black spots on their backs. These members of the lady beetle family closely resemble "lady bugs." The larvae are yellow with rows of black-tipped branched spines and grow to 1/3" long (Plate 10). Adults and larvae feed on the undersides of leaves.



Plate 1 .



Plate 2 .



Plate 3 .



Plate 4 .



Plate 5 .



Plate 6 .



Plate 7 .



Plate 8 .



Plate 9 .



Plate 10 .