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Scout for onion thrips by gently pulling apart allium leaves. Photo: UMass Vegetable Program



Striped cucumber beetle.  
Photo: UMass Vegetable Program

## PEST ALERTS

### Alliums:

[Onion thrips](#) were observed in two fields in Hampshire Co. this week. A common threshold is 1-3 thrips/leaf (organic growers use the lower threshold). Both fields were below this threshold, but populations can quickly explode, especially in hot, dry weather, so start scouting now. To scout, gently pull leaves apart and watch for tiny, slender, wriggling yellow or brown insects in the central leaf blades down at the base. There are many effective products labeled; they can be found in the [onion section of the New England Vegetable Management Guide](#). For organic growers, spinosad (e.g. Entrust) is most effective.

### Asparagus:

[Asparagus beetle](#) was reported in NH and ME this week. This pest does not usually cause enough damage to warrant chemical control, especially since pre-harvest intervals of labeled products limit daily harvesting. If the population is high, hand-picking by knocking beetles into a bucket of soapy water can be effective on small acreage. Cleaning up field residue by disking under ferns in the fall will help reduce the number of overwintering beetles.

### Chenopods:

Mining damage from [leafminers](#) has been reported in the field several New England states. Pressure appears to be relatively low this spring.

### Cucurbits:

[Striped cucumber beetles](#) (SCB) are being reported throughout New England and NY this week, in both field and greenhouse cucurbits. Young plants are particularly vulnerable to the feeding damage from SCB, as well as to bacterial wilt, the disease vectored by SCB. Cucumber, muskmelon, summer squash, and zucchini are the most susceptible to bacterial wilt; treat those crops if 1 beetle is found for every 2 plants. Butternut, watermelon, and most pumpkins are less susceptible to bacterial wilt and can tolerate 1-2 beetles per plant. There aren't many bee-friendly options for chemical control, so get populations under control early on to prevent the need to spray during flowering, or consider spraying in the evening after bees have stopped foraging.

### Solanaceous:

[Colorado potato beetle](#) (CPB) adults are emerging now from overwintering sites in field edges of last year's eggplant and potato fields. Start scouting now, looking for clusters of yellow eggs on the undersides of leaves, to be ready to treat when larvae begin to hatch. CPB eggs look very similar to ladybeetle eggs,

although ladybeetle eggs tend to be lighter yellow and more widely spaced within each cluster, so if you see ladybeetles around your potato or eggplant crop while scouting for CPB eggs, keep this in mind. CPB adults are very poor flyers and primarily walk from their overwintering sites into new host crops. Because they disperse themselves so poorly, cultural controls like crop rotation and physical barriers including trench traps surrounding fields, early-planted trap crops, and mulching with straw can delay and reduce infestation. For more details on all three of those methods, see the [Potato section of the New England Vegetable Management Guide](#).



*Keep an eye out for Colorado potato beetle adults emerging now. Egg laying will begin soon.  
Photo: UMass Vegetable Program*

Reports of [catfacing](#) and symptoms of fertility issues in high tunnel tomatoes have come in from around New England this week, both indicators of the cold spring weather this year. Catfacing severity varies by variety, with heirlooms often being more susceptible, but cold temperatures can cause this physiological distortion in any variety. Removing the first flower cluster is often recommended, since these early flowers are often malformed and produce unmarketable fruit.

### Sweet Corn:

New Hampshire has reported the beginning of the first flight of [European corn borer](#), with 3 out of 16 locations reporting (NY strain) moths being trapped. MA traps will go up this week and we'll have numbers to report next week. Growing degree days (GDD) with a base temperature of 50°F may be used to predict the beginning of moth flight (374 GDD), first eggs (450 GDD), and peak flight (631 GDD). Most sites in MA have accumulated ~200 GDD.

## EVENTS

### MINI-TWILIGHT MEETINGS FOR COMMERCIAL VEGETABLE GROWERS

Join us Wednesdays at 6pm for virtual mini-Twilight Meetings! On each call, we will have a topic lined up for demonstration and discussion, with a presentation of new information on crop, pest, and farm management topics followed by plenty of time for Q&A about the topic at hand and farmer-to-farmer discussion of the issues of the week. Farmers can join by phone or by computer—those who join by computer will be able to see some shared photos and presentations. This is a new program that we hope will allow us to connect with growers while we are not able to physically visit farms for routine scouting and assistance. It is intended for our commercial farmers and will cover topics relevant to small and large scale farm businesses and conventional and organic production systems. Calls will be every other week going forward; see the upcoming schedule below

**How to join:** [Click here to register and receive the sign-in information.](#)

### Upcoming Topics:

- **June 10, 6pm: Greenhouse Fertigation with Judson Reid of Cornell Cooperative Extension**  
Greenhouse growing, whether for transplants, potted plants or those grown to maturity; requires precision management of pH and nutrient levels. How can we achieve a known level of parts per million of nitrogen? How much acid is required to achieve optimal irrigation water pH? Is this possible with organic or conventional inputs? In this workshop we'll do our best to explore these questions.

### Recordings of Past Calls:

- April 22: [Early-season pest scouting](#)
- April 29: [COVID-19 business relief programs](#)
- May 6: [Organic pest management](#)
- May 27: [Cleaning, Sanitizing, & Disinfecting on the Farm: COVID-19 and Beyond](#)

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*Vegetable Notes. Genevieve Higgins, Lisa McKeag, Susan Scheufele, co-editors.*

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