**Tomatoes**

**Tomato Hornworm Sphinx Moth**
These large, well-camouflaged caterpillars are often responsible for any nibbled leaves of vines you may find mid-summer. They are seldom numerous enough to worry about, but they are great subjects for kids to study. If you happen to catch one, you can keep it in a gallon-sized jar with 4in. of dirt in the bottom. Feed it tomato twigs each day. It will burrow into the dirt when mature, turn into a fascinating pupa, and hatch months later into a large gray mottled sphinx moth.

**Leaf Blight**
This is a common problem among tomatoes. It is a soil-borne disease, transmitted through water splash. To prevent soil splash, mulch plants right from the start.

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**Eggplant**

**Flea Beetles**
These tiny black jumping beetles can ravage the foliage of young plants. Either cover plants with Remay until blossoming or dust regularly with Garden Guard, an organic dust which contains pyrethrum. However, a round of flea beetles later in the summer most likely will not hurt the plants enough to prevent a good crop.

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**Brassicas (Kale, Cabbage, Broccoli, Kohlrabi, etc.)**

**Flea Beetles**
Like eggplant, this family is susceptible to flea beetles when young. Control using the instructions above.

**White Cabbage Butterfly Larvae**
These well-camouflaged larvae often attack brassicas. This can usually be remedied by simply picking off caterpillars. However, if infestations occur that cannot be controlled with this method, plants can be sprayed every week or two (between rains) with Thuricide, which contains the organic control BT (*Bacillus thuringiensis*). A “sticker-spread” added to the spray mix helps the spray stick to the waxy brassica leaves.
Cucurbits (Squash, Melons, etc.)

Striped and Twelve-Spotted Cucumber Beetles
These beetles seldom do severe damage to adults, but they can decimate seedlings. For this reason, emerging direct-seeded crops need to be watched carefully. The easiest way to control the beetles’ effect on seedlings is dusting with Garden Guard or covering with Remay.

Squash Vine Borer
This 1-2in. brightly colored day-flying moth looks like a wasp. It is rare that you see the actual pest; instead, you’ll often notice its handiwork when it is too late and vines suddenly wilt mid-summer. Since the female moth lays her eggs where the base of the plant enters the soil, thoroughly cover the bases of plants with rags or Remay. This usually discourages egg-laying. Moths do not show up until early summer, so you have a little time to accomplish this, but you should do so as soon as bushes or vines get large enough. The effects of the moth can be avoided in your winter crop of butternut squash since that species is immune to the vine borer.

Squash Bug
This dark gray sucking insect has wingless nymphs which become winged adults and grow to about 1/2 in. long. They lay clusters of shiny dark eggs on squash leaves. They are usually only a threat to the harvest in cases of large infestations. Squeeze one and have the kids smell; their defense odor is… well, see what they think!

Potatoes

Colorado Potato Beetles
These are the main pest of potatoes and can—in extreme cases—completely defoliate the plants. The best control is vigilance; police the plants regularly in search of adults laying clusters of bright red eggs, often found on the undersides of leaves. Smashing egg masses or the newly emerged larvae (which stay together in groups for a while) is the best remedy. Once the plump grubs reach a larger size, they disperse and become very difficult to control, so timing is very important!

More than just the “Bad Guys”

Not all bugs are bad for gardens. In fact, some are beneficial to plants and are important to a healthy garden. Some schools have used this as a science lesson and invested in cheap bug boxes or magnifying glasses that allow students to examine different species.