UCONN | EXTENSION

Vegetable Pest Alert

Updates and Scouting Reports from the Field May 30, 2025

What to be on the lookout for…

Onion Thrips

Onion thrips have been seen in low numbers so far. They favor hot, dry weather. As temperatures will soon be on the rise, we expect their numbers to rise rapidly too.

Adults overwinter in crop remnants, alfalfa, wheat, greenhouses, and weeds along the border of crop fields. They lay eggs one at a time in the plant epidermis, nymphs feed on leaves, and pupation occurs in the soil. Scout plants along field margins where infestations build early. Look closely between leaf blades to find the light-yellow nymphs or darker adults.

Damage may appear as silver lines, white patches, tip dieback, curling and twisting of leaves, slowed growth, reduced bulb size and yields, or if severe enough, can result in plant death. Begin applications when damage is first noticed or when there are 3 or more thrips per leaf.

The most effective material for organic growers is spinosad (e.g. Entrust) applied with insecticidal soap (e.g. M-Pede) to increase efficacy. Entrust can be used two times in a row before rotating to a different insecticide class. Neem oil (e.g. Trilogy) and azadirachtin (e.g. Azatin O) may be effective also if applied when poplations are still low. Pyrethrin (e.g. Pyganic) can provide knockdown control.

See https://nevegetable.org/crops/onion-scallion-and-shallot/insect-control for more spray options.

Onion thrips nymphs in new growth, between onion leaves. Photo: Whitney Cranshaw, Colorado State University, Bugwood.org.

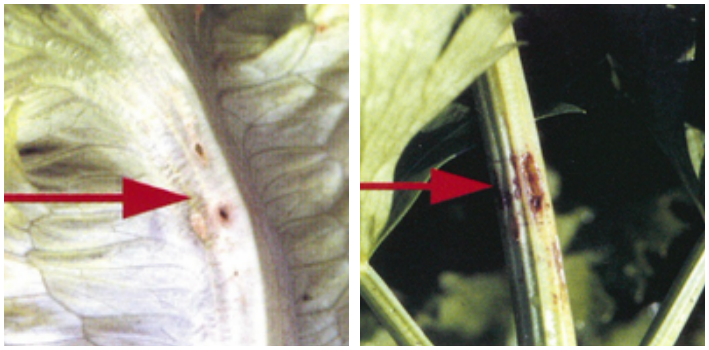
Leaf scaring injury to onion from onion thrips. Photo: The Nault Lab, Cornell Cooperative Extension.

Tarnished Plant Bugs (aka Lygus Bugs)

Last week a farmer in CT shared they had spotted tarnished plant bugs (TPB) on their strawberries. TPB is known to have economic impact on a wide variety of crops including celery, basil, spinach, green beans, tomato, broccoli, peppers, swish chard, fennel, and lettuce, as well as fruits and flowers too.

TPB overwinter in meadows, among native wildflowers, and within weedy patches in fields or on field edges. Overwintered adults become active as soon as temperatures allow, typically in April, seeking out food sources. They feed on plant sap which they access by piercing plant tissue and sucking out of the fruit, flowers, buds, leaf stems and veins. These puncture wounds also create opportunity for infection from diseases. Two to five generations of TPB can occur throughout one growing season.

Multiple life stages of the tarnished plant bug. Photo: University of Georgia, Bugwood.org.



Feeding damage from TPB on the ribs of red leaf lettuce (left) and on a celery stem (right). Photos: UVM Research Laboratory.

Adult TPB are small, 1/4" bronze-colored insects with a triangular marking on its back. Nymphs are smaller and bright green, similar to an aphid but more active. Scouting can be done visually or through the use of sweep nets. Look for adults on flowers and foliage. Take note of wounds on plant shoots, brown discolored tissues, and other malformations. Since TPB are highly mobile and fly when disturbed, they can be difficult to spot. White sticky boards hung low in trees can help with monitoring.

Additional tools to help with managing TPB populations include controlling weedy areas to reduce egg laying and overwintering sites, and utilizing a floating rowcover to create a physical barrier between TPBs and potential food sources in your fields (however, these will need to be removed for pollination when flowers appear). There are a number of natural enemies that are present in CT, but unfortunately they alone cannot provide adequate control of TPB.

For chemical control, check the New England Vegetable Management Guide for information on proper applications depending on life cycle stage, crop stage, and intended crop use. You can also contact us with questions at 860-870-6933.

Continue to be on the lookout for the following

- Aphids on Veggies and Tomatoes in high tunnels and greenhouses
- Brassica Flea Beetles
- Cabbage Root Maggot
- Cold damage on warm season crops
- Colorado Potato Beetle
- Corn Earworm
- European Corn Borer
- Solanaceous Flea Beetles
- Spinach and Beet Leafminers
- White Grubs

2025 Connecticut Pomological Society's Summer Field Day

Tuesday, June 17, 2025
Rogers Orchard, Southington CT
Free to Attend
Please RSVP

Schedule of Events:

- 3:00 – Arrival at Retail Store (336 Long Bottom Rd.)
- 3:15 – Opening Remarks/Welcome/Tour of Packing Facility
- 4:00 – Head to Longview Ciderhouse (36 Long Bottom Rd.)
- 4:30 – Brief Overview of Farm History and Planting Modernization
- 5:00 – Time to Visit Vendors/Equipment; Cider Truck Open
- 5:30 – Dinner
- 6:15 – Start Educational Meeting (~1 CEU requested)
- 7:30 – Adjourn

Educational Meeting:

- "Entomopathogenic Nematodes for Plum Curculio Control"
  Jaime Pinero – UMass Extension
- "Codling Moth and Oriental Fruit Moth Management"
  Ajay Giri – UMass Extension
- "Managing Summer Fruit Rot Diseases in Tree Fruit"
  Elizabeth Garafalo – UMass Extension
- "UConn Fruit and IPM Update"
  Evan Lentz and Mark Nelson – UConn Extension

Call for Farmer Collaboration: Test Cover Crop Varieties This Fall

The Cover Crop Variety Testing Network is seeking farmers to join their team as citizen scientists this fall. Partnering farmers will receive cover crop seed to grow variety trials in their own fields. The target species are cereal rye, hairy vetch, smooth vetch, crimson clover, winter pea, and canola. By monitoring their trials throughout the season, producers will help identify which varieties perform best across different regions, management practices, and farming systems.

Space is limited. Sign up to participate by June 15!

For more information, view the flyer or contact etiennesutton@missouri.edu.

Stay in touch with us

- **Share what you see:** We're here to assist with identification, management strategies, and guidance on best practices. Send us a photo/message via text at 959-929-1031.
- **Facebook Group:** UConn Extension moderates a private Facebook group specifically for commercial vegetable producers. It is a space to share photos of insects and diseases you find in your fields, ask questions, share ideas, and stay engaged with growers across the state. **Click here to join:** "UConn Extension – Vegetable IPM"
- **Schedule a Consultation:** Would you benefit from meeting with an Extension Specialist at your farm to provide insight on pest or disease identification, management strategies, and more? If so, please contact our Vegetable Extension Specialist, Shuresh Ghimire, to set up a farm visit. Email him at shuresh.ghimire@uconn.edu or us at 860-870-6933.

Thank you for reading!

This report was prepared by Nicole Davidow, Outreach Coordinator, and Shuresh Ghimire, Commercial Vegetable Specialist, UConn Extension.

Contact Information

Shuresh Ghimire, Vegetable Extension Specialist: shuresh.ghimire@uconn.edu

Nicole Davidow, Outreach Assistant: nicole.davidow@uconn.edu

Vegetable IPM Office Phone Number: 860-870-6933
Vegetable IPM Cell Phone Number: 959-929-1031 (feel free to text/iMessage photos)
Vegetable IPM Pest Alert Audio Recording: 860-870-6954