

## Cucumber Beetles - (Striped, *Acalymma vittatum*, Spotted, *Diabrotica undecimpunctata howardi*)



Figure 1 Striped, 1/5-1/4" long



Figure 2 Spotted, 1/5-1/4" long

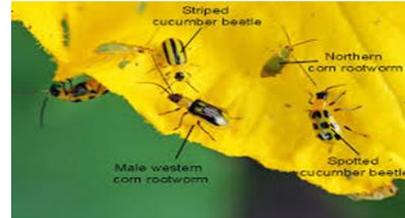


Figure 3 Among similar looking insects

### Damage

Adult cucumber beetles feed mainly on foliage, pollen and flowers. This is most serious when plants are young and can result in complete defoliation or girdling of the plant stem. However, this damage is usually minimal compared to bacterial wilt which can result when cucumber beetles transmit, *Erwinia tracheiphila*, the pathogen that causes wilt in cucumbers and melons. For more information on bacterial wilt, see Additional Resources listed below.

### When Are They Active

In Wisconsin, the striped cucumber beetle is the more serious problem. Adult spotted beetles migrate north from southern states two to four weeks after the emergence of the striped, and as a result of their late appearance are not as problematic as the striped. Striped cucumber beetles become active mid-spring, often mid-May, when temperatures increase. There is no good way of predicting when the activity will begin.

### Susceptible Plants

Adult striped feed almost exclusively on cucurbits, including cucumber, cantaloupe, winter squash, pumpkin, gourd, summer squash and watermelon. The spotted may feed on 200 alternate host plants including beans, corn and potatoes.

### Prevention Methods

Cover young plants, which are more susceptible to feeding damage and bacterial wilt infection, with floating row cover. Uncover flowering plants to allow bees to enter and pollinate. Grow susceptible crops on rotation every third year. Grow varieties that tolerate bacterial wilt, like butternut or acorn squash and Saladin and County Fair 83 cucumbers.

### Treatment Methods

Scout for adult beetles 2-3 times per week early in the season (May) and weekly thereafter. Pay particular attention to field edges where beetles initially congregate. Smash or hand-pick adults. If bacterial wilt is spotted, remove diseased plants immediately.

### Additional Information/Resources

- UW Extension Fact Sheet [XHT1092 Cucumber Beetles](#)
- University of Minnesota Extension [Cucumber beetles in vegetable gardens](#)
- UW Extension Bulletin [A3272 Vine crops disorder: Bacterial wilt](#)
- Wisconsin Master Gardener Program, UW Extension, [Cucumber Beetles](#)
- Dane County UW Extension Horticulture Hotline [608-224-3721](tel:608-224-3721) (M-F, 9 am-12 noon, April 15 – October 31) or [horticulture@countyofdane.com](mailto:horticulture@countyofdane.com)

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