

AVRDC International Cooperators' Fact Sheet

Crucifer Pests

Cabbage Head Caterpillar

Crocidolomia binotalisia

Found throughout Asia Pacific and in some African countries



Damage Symptoms

The leaves are tied together by webbing. Leaf damage occurs on the lower surface. Young foliage may be completely consumed. In cases of severe defoliation, the leaf surface is chewed extensively leaving only the major veins.



[Caterpillars \(see arrows\)
and damage](#)

Insect Characteristics

Chewing mouthparts. Cabbage head caterpillars (CHC) are light to yellowish green with distinctive red heads. They often measure 2 cm long and have three white parallel lines along their backs and two others along each side. Some have black pigmentations on their bodies forming dots triangularly arranged on the sides. Adult moths fly at night.



[Close-up of damage](#)

Where to Look

Caterpillars generally feed on the undersides of leaves. When young, they feed in large groups. Look for plants with damage on the young leaves and extensive webbing.

Technical information

Eggs are laid in masses on the undersides of leaves. Larval feeding may last 4 weeks. Pupation occurs in a cocoon which is formed in the soil at the base of the plant. Although their life cycle may take 40-60 days for completion, multiple generations may occur annually. They are common during hot-wet seasons.

Control

Several insecticides are reported to be effective in controlling CHC in Indonesia and India. They include chlorfluazuron, teflubenzuron, cypermethrin, permethrin, deltamethrin, protenofos, prothiophos, and acephate. Several formulations of *Bacillus thuringiensis* are also effective.

Planting of Indian mustard (*Brassica juncea*) as a trap crop between several rows of common cabbage will attract most CHC moths as well as some diamondback moth (DBM) adults. This technique can be used to reduce chemical sprays on the cabbage, especially in areas where parasitoids control DBM.

Last updated: 2001.

Information from: Field Guide: Insect Pests of Selected Vegetables in Tropical and Subtropical Asia. 1995. B.L. Parker, N.S. Talekar and M. Skinner. Publication 94-427. Pest control recommendations added.

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