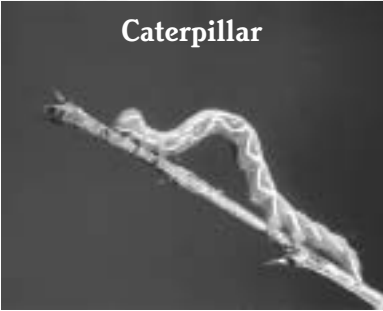


# CATERPILLARS

Caterpillar



## INSECT TIDBITS

A particular Hawk Moth caterpillar from Brazil, when alarmed, raises its head and inflates its thorax, causing it to look like the head of a snake.

The silk caterpillar has been so domesticated over the centuries that it probably does not exist in the wild anymore. It has been reared in China for 4,000 years.

Humans have 792 distinct muscles, whereas caterpillars may have as many as 4,000 separate muscles.

## PREVENTION

- **Cover your vegetables** with row crop covering or other finely meshed netting if you routinely have small green caterpillars on your vegetables, you probably have loopers. It is the white winged looper moth that is the parent.
- **Start seedlings indoors** or purchase transplants if cutworms are a problem. Use barriers made by cutting off the top and bottom of used food containers and placing over young plants.

## LESS-TOXIC CONTROLS

- **Ask a professional** if you are not sure what type of caterpillars you have. Some caterpillars turn into beneficial and beautiful butterflies and moths.
- **Use neem oil**, a low toxic and effective choice for control of caterpillars. Follow label directions.
- **Use beneficial nematodes** to reduce cutworms.
- **Use Bacillus thuringiensis (Bt)**, a bacterial spray that is toxic to caterpillars only at early stages, only when needed for large infestations. Follow label directions. Some beneficial species are affected by Bt.

**FOR MORE INFORMATION**, please contact the Central Coast Environmental Health Project (CCEHP) at (805) 963-1622 ext. 111, or the Santa Barbara County Agricultural Commissioner at (805) 681-5600. Information compiled by the Environmental Center of San Luis Obispo (ECOSLO) and the San Luis Obispo County Agricultural Commissioner's office on behalf of the CCEHP.