

# Cutworms

by Lisa Marie Gee

Photo credit: John C. French Sr., Retired, Universities: Auburn, GA, Clemson and U of MO; Bugwood.org

Cutworms feed on many different plants and can cause severe damage in the home garden. There are surface cutworms that eat off plants near the soil surface, climbing cutworms that climb plants and eat the leaves and fruit, army cutworms which consume nearly all the foliage on a plant, and

subterranean cutworms which remain in the soil to feed on roots and underground stems. These are nocturnal feeders which hide in the soil and debris during the day.

Cutworms are the larvae of night flying moths and they may overwinter as partly grown larvae or as pupae. The adult moths (called "millers") do not cause damage as they are nectar feeders. Some do not feed at all. The larval stage causes all the damage. As warm weather arrives larvae begin to feed. If still in the larval stage in early some, the larvae will pupate. If the cutworm overwintered as a pupa, the adult moth emerges in the spring. Up to 1500 eggs are laid on plant stems or the surface of soil. Hatching occurs in up to two weeks depending on the moth species. The larvae immediately begin to feed and continue throughout the season.

There are many different species of cutworms which vary greatly in appearance.

The most common are soft-bodied, smooth, larvae ranging in color from brown to black to gray, spotted or striped.

To discourage cutworms in your garden eliminate weeds and grasses to reduce places for egg-laying. Placed a collar around the plant base down into the soil may discourage them as well. There are pesticides that can be utilized but be sure to read the label to insure that you have both the correct pesticide and are applying it at the correct time at the correct rate. 🍷

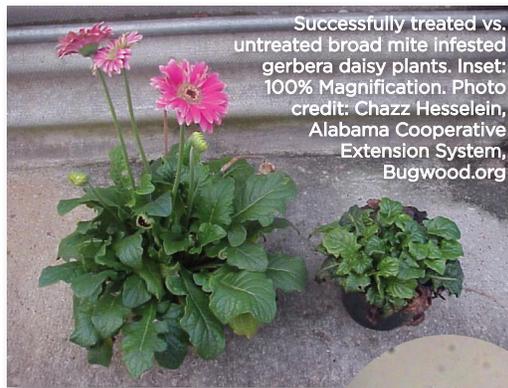
## Broad Mites

by Carol Ann Harlos (based on Gerson U. 1992. Biology and control of the broad mite, *Polyphagotarsonemus latus* (Banks) (Acari: Tarsonemidae). Experimental & Applied Acarology 13: 163-178.)

Despite its name, the broad mite is microscopic.

*Polyphagotarsonemus latus* is an important species that attacks fruits including apples, grapes, avocado, cantaloupe, castor, chili, citrus, coffee, cotton, eggplant, grapes, guava, jute, mango, papaya, passion fruit, pear, potato, sesame, string or pole beans, tea, and tomato. It is also an important pest in greenhouses.

The oval females are 0.2 mm long. Their bodies look swollen (broad) and are brownish to green with a median light stripe



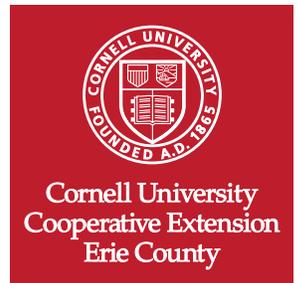
Successfully treated vs. untreated broad mite infested gerbera daisy plants. Inset: 100% Magnification. Photo credit: Chazz Hesselein, Alabama Cooperative Extension System, Bugwood.org

that forks near the back end. The hind legs are tiny. The males are only 0.11 mm and have no stripe. The male has large back legs useful for mating. The eggs are colorless, translucent and elliptical in shape. They are about 0.08 mm long and are covered with 29 to 37 scattered white tufts on the upper surface.



The effect of broad mites seems to appear so quickly that folks are frequently unprepared.

Plants look like they have been treated with an herbicide such as Roundup. Leaves and flowers are twisted and blackened. Obviously this cannot be reversed so this mite must be taken seriously. The broad mite thrives in areas of high humidity and low temperature. The predatory mite *Neoseiulus cucumeris*, is effective as well as certain miticides. 🍷



21 South Grove Street  
East Aurora, NY 14052