

LIFE STAGES OF AN INSECT

During its life cycle, an insect goes through several developmental stages, which may look very different. Moths, butterflies and beetles have four stages: egg, larva, pupa and adult. Some stages of a particular pest may damage greenhouse crops and others do not. For example, the immature stage (larva) of the cabbage looper is commonly found damaging chrysanthemum foliage and flowers. It has chewing mouthparts. The adult is a moth with coiled sucking mouthparts that will not cause damage. It is important to be able to recognize both the immature and adult stages of the common pests. The presence of a non-damaging adult may provide a clue to the damage that is, has been, or will be caused by the immature insect. The different types of developmental stages among greenhouse insect pests and their groups are listed below:

Gradual change

egg, nymph, adult

Examples: Aphids, true bugs, stink bugs, grasshoppers

Note: Mites are not insects, but have a similar life cycle.

Intermediate change

egg, larva, prepupa, and/or pupa, adult

Examples: Thrips, whiteflies



Banded wing whitefly undergoes intermediate change.

Complete change

egg, larva (caterpillar or grub), pupa, adult

Examples: Butterflies and moths, beetles, flies, bees, wasps, and sawflies