

When the eggs hatch, the small, whitish larvae with black heads develop for a few weeks while feeding on the roots, causing minimal damage, then pupate in the soil. The next generation of adults emerge in early- to mid-August, and populations are abundant through late September. Early beetle feeding can defoliate plants, girdle stems and scar young fruit. The beetles often congregate in flowers where they can interrupt pollination and fruit set. Later in the season, the adults also can attack mature fruit.



Striped cucumber beetle adults feeding on pumpkin. Photo: Whitney Cranshaw, Bugwood.org

Controlling the pest starts early in the season. Setting out larger transplants later will give the seedlings a better chance to withstand beetle attack. Using floating row covers as soon as transplants are in the ground or after direct seeding will help exclude the striped cucumber beetles, but these must be removed when the plants begin to flower.

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