

Farmer Fact Sheet 23: Sliperi Kabis Shoot Borer



What is it?

It is an insect that feeds inside shoots of *sliperi kabis*. It also eats cotton, okra and tomato. The scientific name is *Earias*.

What damage does it do?

Caterpillars do the damage. Eggs are laid on stems and buds. Caterpillars enter the buds and tunnel down the shoots, or they penetrate the young stems directly. Shoot tips and leaves wilt and die.

How do I identify it?

Look at the stems and leaves to see if they are wilting (photo, top right) and dying. Look closely for small holes in the stems of these shoots. The caterpillars push their waste out of these holes. Break the stem near a hole to find the caterpillar in its tunnel (photo, left). The adult is a green-white moth (photo, below right).

How do I manage shoot borer?

Small wasps attack the eggs, caterpillars and pupae. Lacewings and ladybird beetles eat the eggs. It is important not to kill these natural enemies with insecticides.

Cultural control:

- Cut out the wilting shoots as soon as they are seen;
- If many shoots are attacked, pull out the plants, stop growing cabbage for a few weeks, and then plant the crop in another garden;
- Grow more *sliperi kabis* during the wet season: the damage is less;

Chemical control:

- Use plant-derived pesticides, such as pyrethrum or derris, as they are natural insecticides and do not last long in the environment. See MAL extension staff.
- Or use insecticides made from bacteria, for example:
 - Spinosad, also known as *Success*; or Bt - *Bacillus thuringiensis kurstaki*.