

## Pest Profile



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**Common Name:** Alfalfa caterpillar

**Scientific Name:** *Colias eurytheme*

**Order and Family:** Lepidoptera; Pieridae

**Size and Appearance:**

	Length (mm)	Appearance
<b>Egg</b>	1.5 mm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Laid singly one end on the upper leaf surface of alfalfa plants that are less than 6" tall</li> <li>- Long, white ovals</li> </ul>
<b>Larva/Nymph</b>	12-38mm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Small caterpillar</li> <li>- Brown with a black head when first hatched</li> <li>- Turns velvety green and has a white and red stripe on each side of its body.</li> </ul>
<b>Adult</b>	Wingspan: 50 mm Body: 25 mm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Yellow, orange, or white colored wings with a black border on the upper surface and solid color on the underside.</li> </ul>
<b>Pupa (if applicable)</b>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Suspended from alfalfa stems or rest on leaves</li> <li>- Gray-green to yellow in color</li> </ul>

**Type of feeder (Chewing, sucking, etc.):** Larvae have chewing mouthparts while adults have siphoning mouthparts.

**Host plant/s:** Legumes including alfalfa, peas, clover, and beans.

**Description of Damage (larvae and adults):** Alfalfa caterpillars will consume entire leaves rather than skeletonizing them like other caterpillars. They also don't cause flagging, in which alfalfa terminals dry up and turn whitish-grey in color. The greatest damage occurs when there are large populations of

alfalfa caterpillars or when eggs are laid in recently harvested fields. When infestations occur in half to full grown plants, growers can harvest early to avoid serious damage.

#### **References:**

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