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## Climbing cutworms

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Climbing cutworms are large, smooth caterpillars measuring 30 to 40 mm when fully grown. The head capsule is usually dark and the body is dull gray-brown, marked with dots or stripes. The larvae overwinter in the soil of the vineyard floor and become active in spring when vine buds begin to expand. Larvae feed on young buds at night, hiding in the soil beneath the vines during the day. Feeding may injure buds or remove them entirely. Cutworms are mainly a pest in areas with sandy soils and in vineyards with weeds under the vines. Injury is often worse in years when cool temperatures slow bud development.

Vineyards with a history of cutworm damage should be scouted regularly during bud expansion, particularly after warmer nights. Once shoot expansion begins, vines are no longer at risk.



Cutworm damage to an expanding bud.  
Photo: Tom Zabadal

### Additional information

- Search [MSU Extension News for Agriculture](#) site
- [Search MSU Fruit CAT Alert](#) newsletter for articles. Type in keyword: climbing cutworm
- [View](#) New York State IPM fact sheet on climbing cutworm.
- [Vineyard Scouting Calendar for Key Pests](#)
- Recommendations from the [Michigan Fruit Management Guide](#)

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Funding for this web site provided by [Project GREEN](#), [American Farmland Trust](#), [EPA Region 5's Strategic Agricultural Initiative](#) program, [The National Foundation for IPM Education](#), the [Center for Agricultural Partnerships](#) and the [MSU Integrated Pest Management Program](#) in collaboration with [MSU Extension](#) and the [Michigan Agricultural Experiment Station](#). Partially support from [NC-IPM Center](#).

05/24/11 Contact: [E. Haney](#)