

Silver-Spotted Skipper: A Curiosity in Soybean

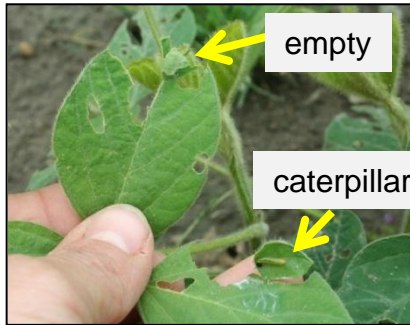
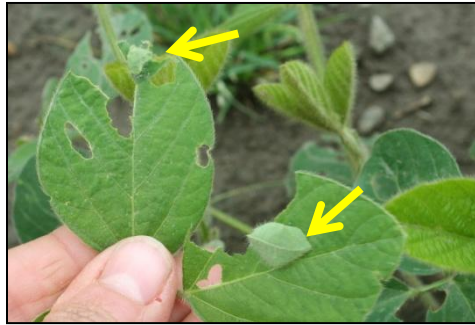
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All pictures taken
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Silver-spotted skipper caterpillars are found in Michigan soybean from June through August. They are not an important pest, but their striking appearance and leaf rolling behavior (on both treated and untreated soybean) lead to questions. There are 2-3 generations per year.

Larvae up to 1/4 inch: Small larvae have alternating green/yellow stripes, a constricted red 'neck', and a dark brown orb-like head. Their shelter is often noticed first, a cut segment on a leaf edge, folded over, and stitched together with silk. Small shelters are abandoned as larvae grow (may see several on a leaf). Frass pellets often litter the area. Larvae explosively 'eject' the pellets and launch them out of the shelter. This is a defense against predators using frass to find caterpillars.



1/2 inch larvae:

It is easier to see the constricted neck and big head, which now has striking orange eye spots.

These larvae roll a leaf edge over and stitch it down with silk.



1 to 1.5 inch larvae: The eye spots, red neck, and yellow prolegs are even more apparent. The body is wrinkly and thicker in the middle than on the ends. These larvae may be harder to find because they layer and stitch multiple leaves together as a shelter.

