

Favorite Books to Identify Insect Pests

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The following list contains our favorite books to identify insect pests on plants. Most of these books do not include chemical controls because the chemicals can change from year to year. We always refer to the CPM or HYG for chemical control, if necessary.

Garden Insects of North America by Whitney Cranshaw, published by Princeton University Press, 2004.

This is an amazing book and a real bargain, especially considering all the color photos. It contains information, including color photos, about insect pests on all kinds of plants, including vegetables, trees, shrubs, perennials, and annuals. There's also a section about beneficials. There is a plant index at the back of the book. Just look up the name of the plant that's being attacked by the insect and it will give you a list of the insects that eat that plant. Then look up each insect and look at the picture of each insect that eats that plant till AHA! You see the insect you're looking for. Not a lot of detailed information about each insect, but a terrific book for identification.

Insects that Feed on Trees and Shrubs by Warren Johnson and Howard Lyon, published by Cornell University Press, 1991. This book contains detailed information about insects on trees and shrubs and includes great color photos. Also has a food plant index.

Caterpillars of Eastern North America by David L. Wagner, published by Princeton University Press in 2005

This is a great field guide about caterpillars – this includes caterpillars that will become moths and butterflies. This book has good photos of the adults as well as the caterpillars and a detailed description of the caterpillars. It also has a food plant listing so if you know which plant the caterpillar was feeding on, you can find the insect.

Caterpillars in the Field and Garden, a Field Guide to the Butterfly Caterpillars of North America by Thomas J. Allen, Jim P. Brock, and Jeffrey Glassberg, Oxford University Press, 2005

This is a smaller book than the above book since it doesn't contain caterpillars that become moths, only those that will become butterflies. It also has great pictures with identity characteristics and contains a very useful territory map of each caterpillar. It also contains an index of food plants.

IPM (Integrated Pest Management) of Midwest Landscapes by Vera Krischik and John Davidson, Produced by the Minnesota Agricultural Experiment Station in 2004. This book contains information about insects on trees, shrubs, and turfgrass. It also contains information about pesticide use, beneficial insects, integrated pest management, and degree days. The food plant list is located near the front of the book. This book is no longer in print, but the entire book is available free at the following web site: <http://www.entomology.umn.edu/cues/IPM-trees/IPM-trees.html>

Field Guide to Northeastern Longhorned Beetles (Coleoptera: Cerambycidae) by Douglas Yanega, published by the Illinois Natural History Survey, 1996. This simple book contains good photographs of the longhorned beetles found in Illinois. A food plant index would make this easier to use.

To see these books and lots more, come visit the Sterling Morton Library at the Arboretum. This is not an ordinary library – this one's special. It's a wonderful treasury of information about plants and nature. The friendly librarians are just waiting to assist you! The library is open from 9:00 to 5:00 Tuesday through Friday and 10:00 to 4:00 on Saturdays. See the web site at http://www.mortonarb.org/visitor_information/smlibrary/smlibrary.htm.

Many of these books are also available at the Arboretum Store.