

# Leaf Miners

Leaf miners damage spinach, chard, and beets by tunneling through the plant's leaves while in the larval state. Adult flies emerge in April and lay clusters of eggs on the leaves of host plants. The larvae hatch and then "mine" their way through the inside of the leaf by feeding and leaving dead, brown tissue behind.



## Appearance

Adult flies are rarely noticed and the larvae are not readily visible due to living and feeding inside a plant's leaf. Larvae are similar in appearance to maggots, pale white to greenish in color with a black mouth but no obvious head.

Eggs are tiny and white, laid in clusters on the underside of a host plant's leaves.



## Prevention and Control

- Begin to scout vulnerable plants for eggs beginning in May. Destroy eggs by crushing them in order to stop larvae from hatching.
- Remove weeds from garden that may serve as hosts to leaf miners as there will be multiple generations that hatch until the fall.
- If you find damaged leaves, either pinch the leaf to crush the larvae, or remove and dispose of the leaf.
- Most pesticides are ineffective against leaf miners.
- The use of floating row covers can prevent flies from laying eggs on the leaves.

