I am the five-spotted Sphinx moth! I can be called many things, including Sphinx moth, hummingbird moth, hawk moth or the tomato hornworm. I can be found in most of Mexico and the United States, and even in southern Canada. I am called a pest in home gardens and on farms. I am a pest because I can eat a lot of plants as a caterpillar and can even eat the same tomato you might eat.

**Why am I important?**

Most people know this moth as the tomato hornworm. This is because we almost always find the caterpillar, or larva, on tomato, potato or tobacco plants. The caterpillar eats the host plant, including leaves, flowers and fruits. Because of this, farmers and gardeners try to find the caterpillar before it eats many of their plants. The caterpillars are almost exactly the same color as tomato leaves, and they often hide underneath leaves, making them hard to find. Many animals will eat the caterpillar, including birds, wasps and spiders, which can help out gardeners!

There are many other types of hawk moths in Nevada that look like the tomato hornworm but don’t eat tomatoes. One example is the white-lined Sphinx moth, which eats plants around Nevada but is not a pest of vegetables that humans eat.
What is my life cycle?

Just like butterflies, Sphinx moths start off as a very small egg, usually laid under a leaf.

*Cats are typically laid singly on leaves.

After a week, a small caterpillar hatches and begins to eat leaves, growing for up to a month.

Sphinx Moth Word Search
See words on Page 3
After this, the caterpillar will “wander” off the plant and find a place to turn into a pupa, usually in the soil. Unlike a butterfly chrysalis, this moth pupa looks very plain.

The adult moth emerges after about two weeks, and drinks nectar from plants that have their flowers open at night. Females will also look for plants to lay eggs. Adults live about two to three weeks.

Fill in the blanks from the word search to complete the paragraph about Sphinx moths.

The __________ moth is perhaps the most striking moth caterpillar in Nevada. These distinctive ________________ are often called ____________ because they have a horn at the tail end of the body. The __________ is best known as a __________ of plants, especially __________, __________ and ___________. They eat all parts of the __________. The moth __________ is often seen hovering in front of flowers drinking __________, giving them the nickname of ______________ __________. Also called the __________ __________, this moth family contains many other beautiful caterpillars and adults that are not pests. One notable Sphinx moth in Nevada is the ______________ Sphinx moth which eats many native plants.

Words for Searches

Sphinx
Hawk moths
Hornworms
Egg
Larva
Pupa
Adult
Tomatoes
Pollinator
Tobacco
Hummingbird Moths
Nectar
Host Plant
Potatoes
Caterpillars
Pest
White-lined
Follow the life cycle from egg to adult. The egg must hatch on the proper host plant or it will not be able to develop into a moth.

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