



Tomato hornworm: I've been asked what to do about the fat cigar-shaped worm you see stripping your tomato plants. This is the tomato hornworm. They can strip a tomato plant in a jiffy.

Control: We have been suggested that you hand-pick the worm and destroy it, rather than apply an insecticide. Every time we suggest squashing it, we receive nasty letters from folks reminding us that the tomato horn worm develops into beautiful hawk and sphinx moths. The caterpillars burrow into the earth and will live. Others suggested putting the worms on your neighbor's plants.

worm poisonous? While we've had some gardeners say that the eating is poisonous, many entomologists (bug experts) have written to tell us this worm is harmless.

Incidentally, one reader suggested you take the tomato hornworm and transfer it to the deadly nightshade plant (same member of the tomato family) and it will live. Others suggested putting the worms on your neighbor's plants.

TUBEROUS BEGONIAS: This handsome shade-loving plant has been called the "Moss-kingbird flower" because its flowers resemble the carnation, camellia, geranium, hollyhock and others. During the summer you're apt to find the plant dropping its buds and blossoms.

GREEN THUMB CLINIC: A reader writes: "What is our neighbor's petunias are so nice and thrifty, while ours are sprawling and without any bloom?"

Answer: I think you'll find that your neighbor babies her petunias — feeds them, waters them daily (or in dry weather) and she probably snips off the spent blossoms (seed pods), cut only half the stem. The other half will mature and fall off by itself.

Free: Send me a self-stamped envelope for my bulletin, "How to Grow Petunias." You'll need this if your perennial bed is bad.

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