Leaf miner on Brassica

Recognize the problem
Leaf miner adults are small black flies with a bright yellow spot on their back. Females puncture leaves to feed on plant juice and lay eggs in the leaf tissues. After 2-4 days, the eggs hatch and larvae feed between the upper and lower surface of leaves making whitish lines or leaf mines. These suggest that the leaf miners are present.

Background
Leaf miners are found in old crop remains and also on crops related to brassicas. Their population is high on seedlings. The mines or tunnels can kill seedlings and in older plants, allow fungal diseases to enter the leaves. The leaves are rendered unmarketable. Leaf miners are attracted to the colour yellow.

Management
Non-chemical control
- Conserve natural enemies especially parasitoids by avoiding spraying pesticides when there are enough natural enemies to reduce the number of caterpillars in the field.
- Where possible, avoid planting next to infested fields, especially those near harvested crops.
- Plough to expose the miners so they burn in the sun and get eaten by natural enemies.
- Plant seedlings free of leaf miners.
- Practice field hygiene e.g. handpicking and destroying mined leaves, burning all infected plant parts and destroying hosts such as old crop debris.
- Use yellow sticky traps or yellow basins filled with water to attract adults.

Chemical control
- Effective insecticides to use include Abamectin, Bifenthrin and Methoxyfenozide.

When using a pesticide, always wear protective clothing and follow the instructions on the product label, such as dosage, timing of application, and pre-harvest interval.

Scientific name(s) > Liriomyza spp.

The recommendations in this factsheet are relevant to: many countries where this pest or problem is present