

Cucurbit Beetle

Diabrotica speciosa

Native to South America, this species has not yet established a colony within the U.S. It could possibly be carried into the country through farm machinery that is redistributing soil. If the soil is contaminated with eggs and/or pupae, it will cause a high alert especially in the mid-west and east where acres of crops are grown. It is able to adapt to temperate climates and so will have a wide distribution if permitted.



Description:

Eggs are oval in shape and can be clear white to a pale yellow in color. They are laid in the soil near host plants by the female in clusters which are loosely held together by a colorless secretion. Larvae are off-white to a chalky white with the head and rear a dirty yellow to a light brown. The larvae stay in the soil and usually congregate around the root system where it feeds on the roots. The pupae are white in color and are long lengthwise and can be found in the soil also. Adults are usually grass-green or green-blue with six yellow spots on its back. The colors may vary depending on the age of the beetle and when/how much food is provided. The head and antennae are a light brown or reddish brown with the eyes usually black.

Damage:

The Cucurbit Beetle seems to especially be attracted to corn, potatoes and peanuts but can feed on any tender, flowering plant. Larvae attack the roots which could potentially kill the plant but usually only stunts the growth. Adults of the South American species does more damage than the North American species and can potentially have more generations within a season depending on temperature and food supply. If the population is able to increase, some vegetable crops can be completely destroyed.

Information Sources:

Center for Integrated Pest Management. Global Pest and Disease Database. *Diabrotica speciosa*. 13 April 2012. www.gpdd.info/

Picture Sources:

Embrapa. [Insetos pragas e seu controle](http://sistemasdeproducao.cnptia.embrapa.br/FontesHTML/Amora/SistemaProducaoAmoreiraPreta/pragas.htm). September 2008. 13 April 2012.

<http://sistemasdeproducao.cnptia.embrapa.br/FontesHTML/Amora/SistemaProducaoAmoreiraPreta/pragas.htm>

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