



URI COLLEGE OF THE ENVIRONMENT AND LIFE SCIENCES (CELS) OUTREACH CENTER

3 East Alumni Avenue
Kingston, Rhode Island 02881

For more information:

Call:

In RI: URI MGA Hotline
1-800-448-1011
Mon.-Thurs. 9:00 a.m.—2:00 p.m.

In MA and CT: 401-874-2900

Outside New England please contact Cooperative Extension in your county.

Websites:

URI Master Gardener Association
www.urimga.org

CELS Outreach Center
www.uri.edu/cels/ceo



BLACK VINE WEEVIL

The black vine weevil is a pest of over 100 landscape plants. The adults feed on a wide variety of evergreen, deciduous, and herbaceous plants. The larvae are destructive on yew, hemlock, rhododendron, and several other evergreens. It will sometimes feed on strawberry or impatiens. Since the weevils do not fly, they disperse chiefly by walking, although they may be transported by humans and plants. The weevils feed at night and hide under leaf litter or in the soil during the day. When disturbed, adults feign death.

Adults are slate grey to blackish brown weevils that are oblong oval in shape, about 1/2-inch long and have a short, broad snout. The legless, white C-shaped larvae have a wrinkled appearance and a well-developed brown head.

Overwintering larvae feed on roots deep in the soil and pupate in May. Adults dig their way out of the ground in mid-June and crawl up the plants to feed. Feeding occurs mostly at night and adults hide in dark places on the plants or on the ground during the day. Adults crawl or drop to the ground to lay eggs. All of the weevils are female; they reproduce by development of unfertilized eggs. Most adults die in the fall and larvae survive the winter in the soil. There is only one generation per year.

Damage

The most severe by the black vine weevil done by larvae, which feed on roots and underground stems, sometimes girdling the root crown. Larvae even feed on roots of houseplants that spend the summer out of doors near infested plants. Symptoms include stunting and yellowing or off-color foliage. Root feeding often results in death of the plant. Unfortunately, the problem is first noticed when plants are near death.

Adults feed from the outer margin of the leaf inward, creating characteristic notches, and these notches can be used as an early indicator of potential larvae in the soil. Adults cut notches on the margins only, they never create holes on the center of the leaf. On yew, needles nearer to the main trunk, at the base of the shrub, will show notching and feeding scars. While the foliar damage from the adult weevils is often not severe it can be unsightly.

Control

These weevils are difficult to control once established because of their nocturnal behavior, subterranean habits of the larvae, and lack of natural predators or parasites.

PESTICIDES ARE POISONOUS!! Read and follow all safety precautions on labels. Handle carefully and store in original containers out of reach of children, pets, or livestock. Dispose of empty containers immediately, in a safe manner and place. Pesticides should never be stored with foods or in areas where people eat.

When trade names are used for identification, no product endorsement is implied, nor is discrimination intended against similar materials. Be sure that the pesticide that you wish to use is registered in the state of use.

The user of this information assumes all risk for personal injury or property damage.

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Rhode Island Cooperative Extension provides equal program and employment opportunities. U.S. Department of Agriculture cooperating.



Note: The Hotline is open Monday—Thursday, 9:00 a.m.—2:00 p.m. from March 1 to November 1.

Hand removal of weevils can be effective, especially in small plantings or for individual plants. Where possible, quarantine plants with leaf notches. If houseplant roots are found to be infested with larvae, discarding the plant may be the best practice. Washing off the roots and repotting might be an alternative, but success will depend on the amount of damage already done.

Except for protecting young plants, chemical control is not generally needed by home gardeners. When it is required, homeowner treatments are best directed against adults during mid-June to kill new adults before they start laying eggs. Orthene can be applied at that time with a follow-up treatment 3 weeks later. Insecticide applications should be made late in the day (weevils are nocturnal feeders). Be sure to follow the label directions when using any pesticide.

Adapted from: Cornell Cooperative Extension and Virginia Cooperative Extension, 1999; Ohio State University Extension