

Flea Beetles

Many species (Coleoptera: Chrysomelidae)

(Origin: Native and Exotic)



Adult Flea Beetle

Primary Host: Many vegetable crops. Eggplant is especially vulnerable to attack.

Damage: Chew small holes in leaves, giving the leaf a “shot hole” appearance.

Management: Focus on protecting the youngest plants from attack.

Biocontrols: None known to be effective.

Cultural Controls: Weed control in and around planting sites deprive larvae of food sources; remove crop debris to eliminate overwintering sites; delayed planting may avoid peak populations; rotation of crops.

Physical Controls: Row covers can protect seedlings.

Chemical Controls: Contact your local Penn State County Extension Agent for more information. <http://www.extension.psu.edu/extmap.html>

Insect Description:

Adults: Small, shiny beetles with back legs enlarged for jumping like fleas when disturbed.

Corn Flea Beetle: $\frac{1}{16}$ ”, strips the green top layer from leaves, leaving irregular brown or grey lines. Can transmit bacterium of Stewart’s wilt.

Potato Flea Beetle: small, $\frac{1}{16}$ ” long, black.

Striped Flea Beetle: $\frac{1}{12}$ ”, pale stripe on each wing.

Larvae: Usually feed on roots of host plant.

Life History: For most species, adults overwinter underground or beneath plant debris. During April and May, they become active, mate and lay eggs. Eggs typically hatch in 10 days. Larval and pupal development take place during the summer. “New” adults emerge and feed during late summer and fall before seeking overwintering sites.



Flea Beetle Damage