

Cereal Leaf Beetle

Oulema melanopus (L.) - Coleoptera: Chrysomelidae



Cereal Leaf Beetle adult



Damage done by CLB

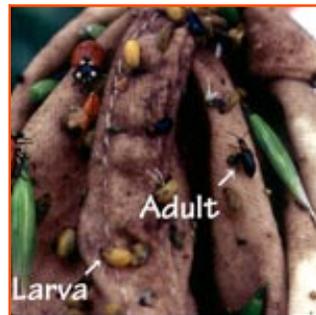
The cereal leaf beetle (CLB) is a native of Europe and Asia, and was first found in the eastern United States in the 1940's. This beetle will feed on a variety of cultivated and wild grasses with oats, barley, and wheat as preferred hosts. The damage incurred by the feeding of both the adults and larvae can be substantial. Currently, this insect is not found in California, but is in northern and eastern Oregon, and eastern Nevada.



Young CLB larva



Mature CLB larva



Sweep net sample with CLB adults and larvae



Feeding damage of CLB

CLB adults are approximately 3/16 in. long and have shiny, metallic blue forewings and a bright red thorax. The adults spend the winter in leaf litter and duff near infested fields. In the spring, the adults leave the overwintering sites, mate, and begin to lay eggs. Each female CLB can lay between 100 – 400 eggs. The small, yellowish eggs are placed individually on the upper surface of the leaf, and yellow, grub-like larvae emerge in about a week at temperatures near 80°F. To defend against predators, the larvae cover their bodies with a slimy brown substance comprised of mucus and fecal matter. Larvae feed on the upper surface of a leaf, leaving only a thin membrane. They complete 4 instars in about 12 – 20 days at temperatures near 80°F, and then drop to the soil surface. Pupation occurs in earthen cells about 1/2 to 2 inches deep. Adults emerge from the pupae after about 15 – 20 days. These adults then move out of the grain field to protected places and will return to grain fields the following spring to begin the cycle again.

This insect is not currently known to occur in California. If you find beetles resembling CLB, please contact your local County Agricultural Commissioner's Office. Their phone number can be found in the County Government section of your phone book.

