

Japanese beetle

Nursery Advisory Board

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Japanese beetle

Popillia japonica Newman (Coleoptera: Scarabaeidae)

Pest of many different plants.

Native to Japan.

Now a pest over most of the eastern United States.

Targeted with exclusion, detection, and eradication programs in California.



What it looks like

Adult:

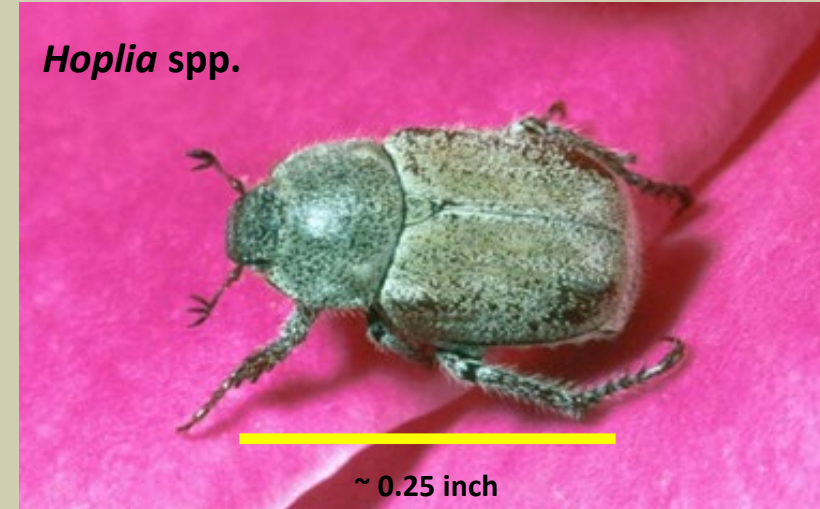
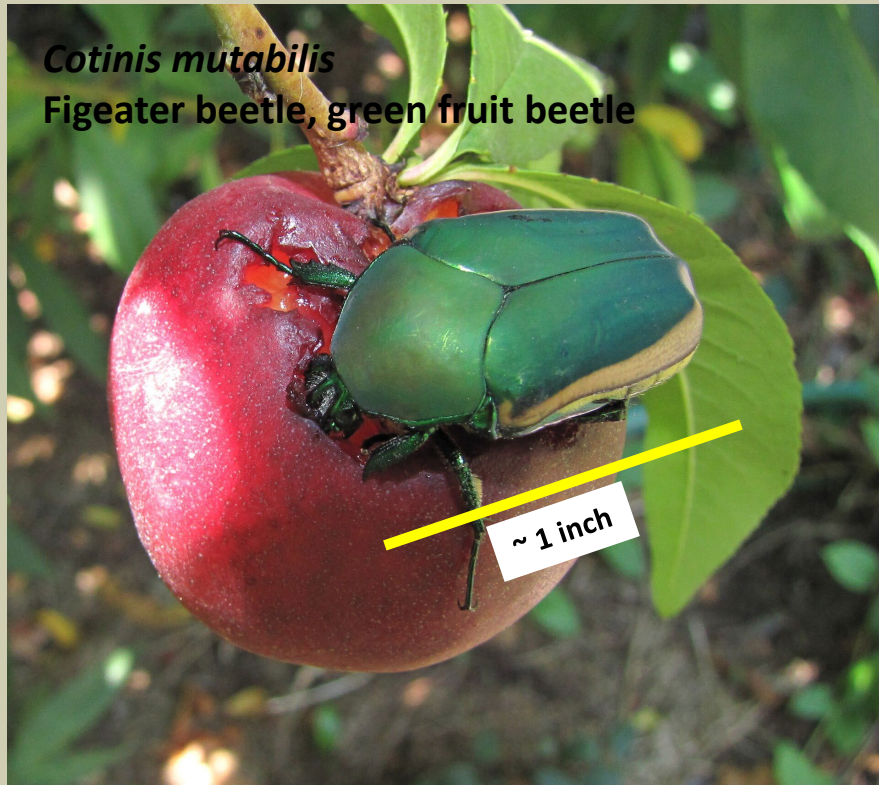
Approximately 0.5 inch long.
Metallic green except for coppery elytra.
Tufts of white setae on sides of abdomen.

Larva:

C-shaped grub (“white grub”).
Numerous species of scarab beetles in California have similar larvae that live in the soil. Identification requires examination of microscopic characters (e.g., pattern of setae on abdomen).



Common beetles confused with Japanese beetle in California



Biology

Typically, one generation per year.

Adults emerge in summer (feeding, mating).

Adult females lay eggs in soil.

Larvae live underground and feed on roots.

Larvae overwinter.

Pupation occurs in spring.



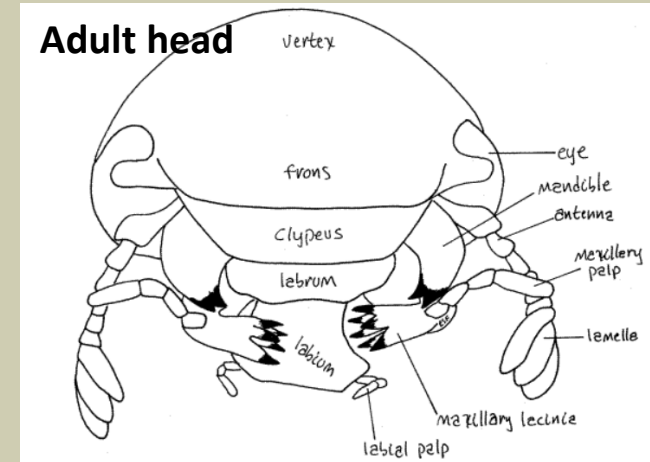
Feeding

Adult and larval Japanese beetles have chewing mouthparts.

Adult Japanese beetles feed on over 300 species of plants in 79 plant families.

Hosts include grapes, fruit trees, ornamentals, and corn.

Japanese beetle larvae live in the soil and feed primarily on roots, especially grass roots.



Damage

Feeding by adults damages leaves, flowers, and fruit.

Crops affected include grapes, corn, and soybeans.

Larval feeding damages grass, e.g., on lawns and golf courses.

Secondary damage can occur to grass when birds or other animals dig up larvae to feed on them.



Potential pathways for Japanese beetle introduction to California

Aircraft: Live adult Japanese beetles are sometimes found as hitchhikers on cargo aircraft and Japanese beetles are sometimes caught in high-risk traps near airports.

Soil (e.g., with sod or nursery stock). Larvae may be present.

Introduced to New Jersey reported to have resulted from shipment of iris plants with soil containing Japanese beetle larvae.

How are these pathways addressed?



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Quarantines

USDA Federal Domestic Quarantine

Certain airports are regulated (conditions regarding loading cargo).

California State Exterior Quarantine

Regulates soil and plants with soil (including sod).



Cargo aircraft inspections

Federal domestic quarantine regulates flights from Japanese beetle-infested states.

Incoming cargo planes inspected for Japanese beetle (not only those from regulated airports).

2025: 135 adult Japanese beetles found (nine were alive, four were moribund, and 122 were dead).

2019: CDFA begins to look for SLF in planes as well.



Detection

Statewide Japanese beetle detection program:

Trap contains feeding lure and male attractant.

16,565 traps statewide.



Eradication

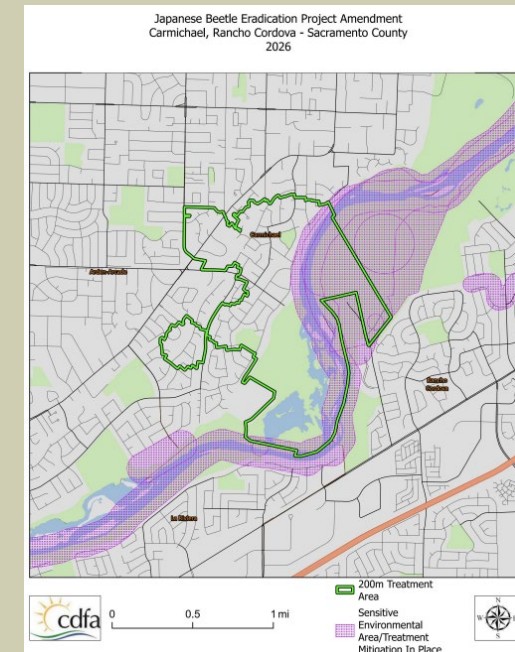
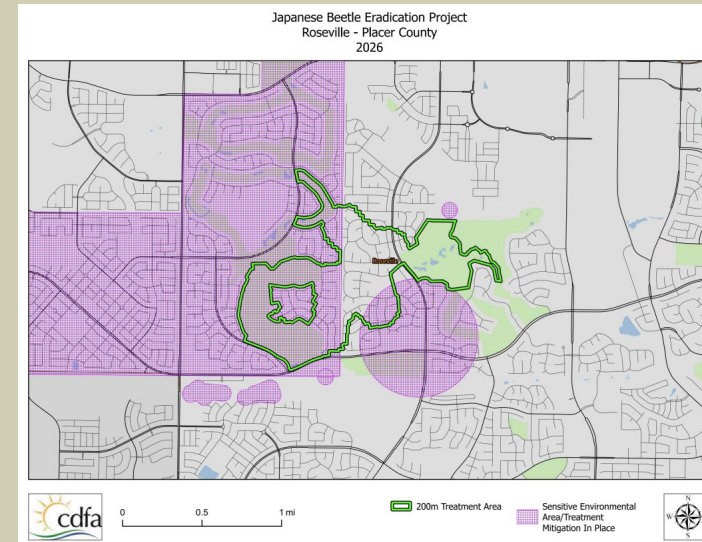
Infestations of Japanese beetle are occasionally detected in California, most often in the Sacramento area.

2026: Two Japanese beetle eradication projects (treatment in-progress):

Placer County: 473 acres.

Sacramento County: 749 acres.

Acelepryn (granular) applied to irrigated turfgrass April-May.



Do you think you might have Japanese beetle?

Adult Japanese beetles are very distinctive in appearance, while the larvae look like a lot of other things.

Photographs (only adult beetles can be tentatively identified with photographs) can be submitted via the Pest Hotline.

Samples can (generally) be submitted to your county agricultural commissioner for identification.



The screenshot shows the CDFA website's 'Report a Pest' page. At the top, the CDFA logo and 'CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF FOOD AND AGRICULTURE' are visible. A navigation bar includes 'CDFA Programs', 'Plant Health & Pest Prevention', 'Contact', 'Meetings', and 'Reg'. Below the navigation, a breadcrumb trail reads 'CDFA Home / Plant Health / Report a Pest'. The main heading is 'Report a Pest'. A red button with a phone icon contains the text 'Pest Hotline: 1-800-491-1899'. To the right is a cartoon character of a red apple with a green leaf and a smiling face, with the word 'Forestry' written vertically on its side. Below the button, the text asks: 'Have you seen a new or unusual plant or pest in your area? If so, you can play an important role in protecting California agriculture and your environment by reporting the sighting of a plant or pest that you suspect may be a new invasive species in your area.' At the bottom, there are two bullet points: 'Report a Pest Web App' and 'Report a Pest Sighting Form' with a document icon.

cdfa CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF FOOD AND AGRICULTURE

CDFA Programs ▾ Plant Health & Pest Prevention ▾ Contact ▾ Meetings ▾ Reg

[CDFA Home](#) / [Plant Health](#) / [Report a Pest](#)

Report a Pest

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Thank you!

