

## Bean Leaf Beetles (*Cerotoma trifurcata*)



Figure 1 Adult



Figure 2. Larva

### Damage

Adults usually eat the leaves of seedlings, especially the cotyledons (seed leaves). They inflict damage by scooping pits out of the seed leaves, and also by biting into the seed pods, which distorts their growth and can leave them susceptible to disease. The larvae feed on stems, roots, and nodules in the soil.

### When Are They Active

Adults overwinter and become active in mid-May to early June. Before the crop sprouts, they hide in adjacent fields of weeds and plants such as alfalfa. Look for eggs at the base of stems soon after that time. Eggs hatch after one to three weeks, then larvae feed for 30 days. Adults emerge in mid-July, with another generation late August to September. That last generation will remain into the fall and overwinter till next year.

### Susceptible Plants

These beetles like to eat legumes, green beans especially, but also soybeans, alfalfa, and clover. They also target cucurbits such as squash, pumpkins, melons, and cucumbers.

### Prevention Methods

Remove plant debris, and mow down weeds growing near target crops. Plant beans later in the season, such as mid- to late June. Cover plants with floating row cover, taking care to pin it to the ground so the beetles can't crawl under.

### Treatment Methods

Rotenone, pyrethrum, or neem are options for organic growers. The larvae of some tachinid flies parasitize larvae of bean leaf beetles, controlling their numbers.

### Additional Information/Resources

- UW Extension Bulletin [XHT1131 Bean Leaf Beetle](#)
- Iowa State University Department of Entomology [Bean Leaf Beetle](#)
- Cornell Insect Diagnostic Laboratory [Mexican Bean Beetle](#) (different than leaf bean leaf beetle but also a problem)
- Dane County UW Extension Horticulture Hotline [608-224-3721](tel:608-224-3721) (M-F, 9 am-12 noon, April 15 – October 31) or [horticulture@countyofdane.com](mailto:horticulture@countyofdane.com)

*Photo Credits: Figure 1- Frank Peairs, Colorado State University, Bugwood.org; Figure 2-Iowa State University Department of Entomology Bean Leaf Beetle website, photo by Jeff Bradshaw*