

Problem: Blister Beetles



Hosts: Tomatoes, beans, peas, potatoes, and other vegetables.

Description: Though there are several members of this family that can cause damage, the Striped and Gray Blister Beetles are the most common. The adult stage causes the damage; not the larvae. The beetles tend to move in swarms and can cause a great deal of defoliation but may not stay in one area for very long.

Blister beetles pass the winter in a pseudopupa stage and then go through a final molt in the spring. After a short period of activity, the larva enters the true pupal stage with the adults emerging midsummer.

Blister beetles have long, slender bodies with a relatively large head. These insects release a caustic substance when crushed that can raise blisters on the skin.

Recommendations: Often beetles will move on in a day or two. If beetles are handpicked, be sure to wear gloves. A number of stomach insecticides such as cyfluthrin (BioAdvanced Vegetable & Garden Insect Spray), permethrin (Bonide Eight Vegetable, Fruit and Flower Concentrate and Hi-Yield Garden and Farm Insect Control) and gamma-cyhalothrin (Spectracide Triazicide) are also effective for control.

References:

1. Insect Pests, A Golden Guide, Golden Press, pg 74.
2. Garden Insects of North America, Princeton University Press, pg 176

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