

Montana small grain insects

Cereal leaf beetle

Oulema melanopus (L.) (Coleoptera: Chrysomelidae)

The cereal leaf beetle is an European pest which appeared in Michigan in 1969. It was detected in the Yellowstone Valley in Montana in 1988. Beetles and larvae (grubs) feed on leaves of barley, wheat, oats, and other grasses.

Capsule Information Series

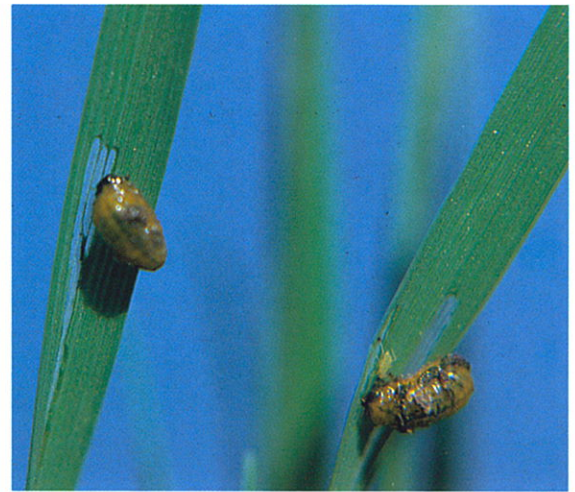
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Adult

Beetles fly from overwintering sites to crops in the spring. Feeding causes long narrow holes in leaves. Beetles prefer oats and wild oats. Young plants are preferred over more mature plants. Beetles lay small yellow eggs on leaves. Eggs hatch into grubs which also feed on leaves. Heavy feeding resembles frost damage.



Larvae

Larvae are covered with a slimy black material which rubs off when they are disturbed. They feed on leaf surfaces for about 2 weeks. Mature larvae enter the soil and pupate, or change to adult beetles. New adults emerge and feed on late maturing small grains or on corn foliage. They leave fields in August. Overwintering sites are not known.

Management practices under investigation include:

- Resistant wheat varieties need to be developed.
- Parasites from other states should be released in Montana.
- Insecticides are effective for controlling larvae.
- Fall or spring tillage practices are not effective for controlling the pest.



Feeding damage on corn by new generation adults in mid summer.