



## Flea Beetle Control for Home Gardens

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**Description:** Many species. Active, hops away when disturbed. Small dark beetle that is flea-like in appearance. Black, dark blue, brown, or striped beetles; about 1/16-inch long. Common Host Plant(s): Tomato, pepper, cabbage and related crops, eggplant, beet, spinach, turnip, mustard and radish.

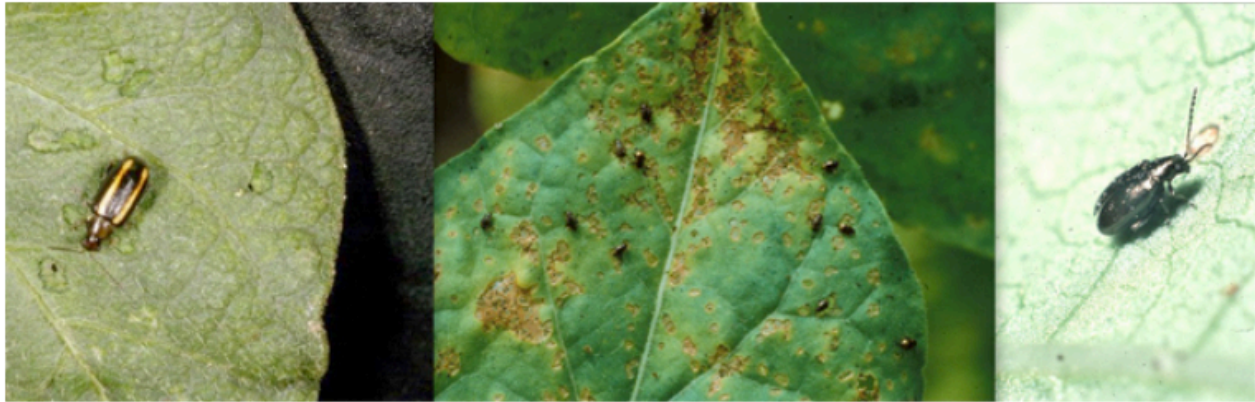
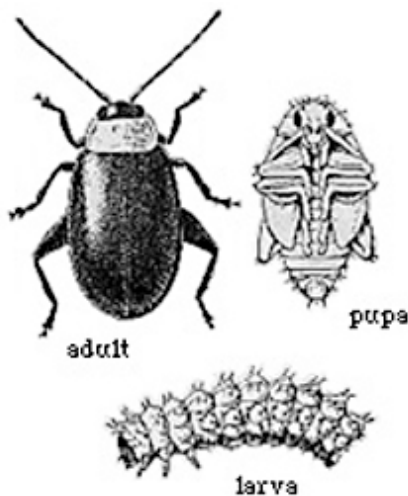


Fig. 1: left: palestriped flea beetle (Frank Peairs, Colorado State University, Bugwood.org); center: tobacco flea beetle (R.J. Reynolds Tobacco Company Slide Set, R.J. Reynolds Tobacco Company, Bugwood.org), right: a flea beetle (Alton N. Sparks, Jr., University of Georgia, Bugwood.org)

**Damage:** Adults and larvae chew many tiny holes in leaves. Young plants, especially transplants, are severely damaged. Most noticeable damage is small brown spots and holes in leaves.

**Distribution:** Throughout Virginia.

**Lifecycle:** Adults overwinter in soil; in early spring, they begin feeding on crop foliage. Females deposit eggs near the soil line where larvae emerge in about a week and feed on roots. Larvae feed for two to three weeks until reaching maturity and then pupate, emerging from the soil as adults in about two weeks.



**Cultural Control:** Till under weed and crop debris in the fall after harvest. Use a garden fabric, also known as a row cover or floating row cover to exclude the flea beetles. Use the garden fabric in combination with fall tilling and crop rotation. Use hoops to keep the cover above the plants. Keep the garden fabric over the plants from planting until the beginning of flowering.

**Organic/Biological Control:** Dust with diatomaceous earth or Pyrethrins for serious infestations.

**Chemical Control:** Treat with a registered insecticide when insects appear in damaging numbers. Repeat as needed. Follow all label instructions, precautions, and pre-harvest intervals. **FOR SWEET CORN:** CAUTION Application of insecticides to tassel region of corn during the pollen shedding period can harm honey bees and other pollinators.

### Life stages of the Flea Beetle