

PEPPER WEEVIL

by Eric Day and Alexandra Spring



Fig. 1: Pepper Weevil adult
[A N Sparks, Jr., University of Georgia,
Bugwood.org]

DESCRIPTION: Adult: Black snout beetle, gray or yellow markings, 1/8 inch long. The snout is about half the length of the body. Larva: Grayish white, pale brown head. Larvae are legless and up to 1/4 inch long.

COMMON HOST PLANT(S): Pepper.

DAMAGE: Adults feed on foliage, blossom buds and tender pods. Larvae feed within buds and pods. Large pods are misshapen and discolored. Buds and pods may drop off plants.

DISTRIBUTION: From Florida and southern Georgia to southern California and recently detected in Virginia Beach by Tom Kuhar and Peter Schultz.

LIFECYCLE: Pepper weevils overwinter in warm climates, such as Florida. Migration north occurs in the spring, either through flying or transport on pepper transplants or market fruit. In the spring pepper weevils are found on solanaceous weed hosts, moving to pepper plants as they are planted in warmer weather. In early summer females bore holes in pepper buds and fruit where they deposit eggs, which they protect with brownish excrement. Over a period of a month a female may lay as many as 200 eggs. Larvae emerge from eggs in about 3-5 days and enter pepper pods. Pepper weevil larvae feed inside the pepper for over a week. Pupation occurs inside peppers in a cell constructed of frass. Beetles emerge in about 4-6 days. The time span from egg to adult beetle is about 2-3 weeks in warm weather, but increases as temperatures drop.



Fig. 2: Pepper Weevil larvae inside pepper
[D Riley, University of Georgia,
Bugwood.org]

CULTURAL CONTROL: Remove plants immediately after harvest. Remove nearby nightshade plants.

ORGANIC/BIOLOGICAL CONTROL: No known organic/biological control for pepper weevil at this time.

CHEMICAL CONTROL: Use a registered insecticide to control the pepper weevil.