

ROSE CHAFER

by Eric Day and Alexandra Spring



Fig. 1: Rose Chafer beetle. Photo by Eric Day, Virginia Tech

DESCRIPTION: Gray or fawn colored beetle with a reddish-brown head. It is long legged and slender, 1/2 inch long.

COMMON HOST PLANT(S): Blackberry, raspberry, strawberry, cabbage, beans, beets, and pepper.

DAMAGE: Feeds on foliage, buds and flowers.

DISTRIBUTION: Eastern United States.

LIFECYCLE: Rose chafer larvae overwinter in the soil. As temperatures rise in the spring larvae move up towards the soil surface and pupate. In a few weeks adult beetles emerge and begin feeding for a period of about four to six weeks. Females deposit groups of 6-40 eggs about six inches below the soil surface in sandy or grassy areas.

Larvae hatch in one to three weeks, depending on temperature, and begin to feed on roots. One generation occurs annually in Virginia.

CULTURAL CONTROL: Handpick beetles where found.

ORGANIC/BIOLOGICAL CONTROL: A temporary cheesecloth fence (slightly higher than the plant) can be used to deter the beetles. The beetles seem not to fly over the fence.

CHEMICAL CONTROL: Start treatment with a registered insecticide when cut buds or leaf holes are seen. This is usually just after beginning of bloom (late March or early April). Treat at weekly intervals as needed. Rotate strawberries to a part of the garden that has not had strawberries in the last year.

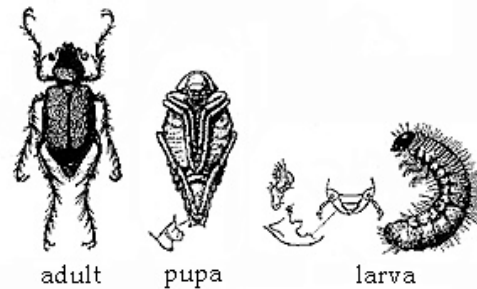


Fig. 2: Life stages of the Rose Chafer