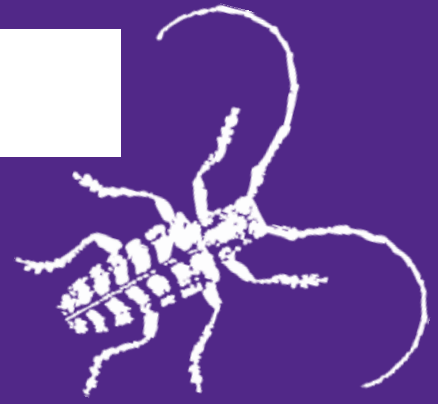


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April 17, 2019 #2

Common Asparagus Beetle
Alfalfa Weevil Update

Common Asparagus Beetle

If you are growing asparagus then it is that time of year to be aware of the only insect pest of asparagus; the common asparagus beetle, *Crioceris asparagi*. Adult beetles are 1/4 inch long. The body is metallic blue to black with red margins and six cream-colored markings (Figure 1). Adults emerge from the soil in early spring and fly to new asparagus shoots where they mate and feed. Females lay up to 30 eggs on the end of spear tips as they emerge from the soil (Figure 2). Larvae hatch from eggs after about a week, migrate onto

Figure1. Common Asparagus Beetle Adult (Author--Raymond Cloyd, KSU)



Figure2. Common Asparagus Beetle Eggs on Spear Tip of Asparagus (Author--Raymond Cloyd, KSU)



the ferns, and commence feeding. The larvae look like a small slug. They are wrinkled, 1/3 inch in length, and olive-green to gray with black heads and legs (Figure 3). Larvae feed for approximately two-weeks and then drop to the ground, burrow into the soil, and form a yellow pupa. After several weeks,



Figure3. Common Asparagus Beetle Larvae Feeding on Asparagus (Author--Raymond Cloyd, KSU)

adults emerge and start feeding. Common asparagus beetles overwinter underneath plant debris, loose bark, or hollow stems of old asparagus plants. The life cycle can be completed in eight-weeks. There are two generations in Kansas.

The adults and larvae feed on asparagus spears and can defoliate ferns if populations are extensive. Larvae consume leaves and tender buds near the tips, which leaves scars that eventually turn brown. Damage caused by larvae interferes with the plant's ability to photosynthesize (manufacture food); thus depleting food reserves for next year's crop.

The plant protection strategies that can be implemented to reduce problems with common asparagus beetle populations include: applying insecticides; hand-picking eggs, adults, and larvae and placing into a container with soapy water; and/or removing any plant debris after the growing season to eliminate overwintering sites for adults. Insecticides should be applied as soon as common asparagus beetles are present, and again in late summer through early fall to kill adults before they overwinter. Thorough coverage of all plant parts is important in suppressing populations.

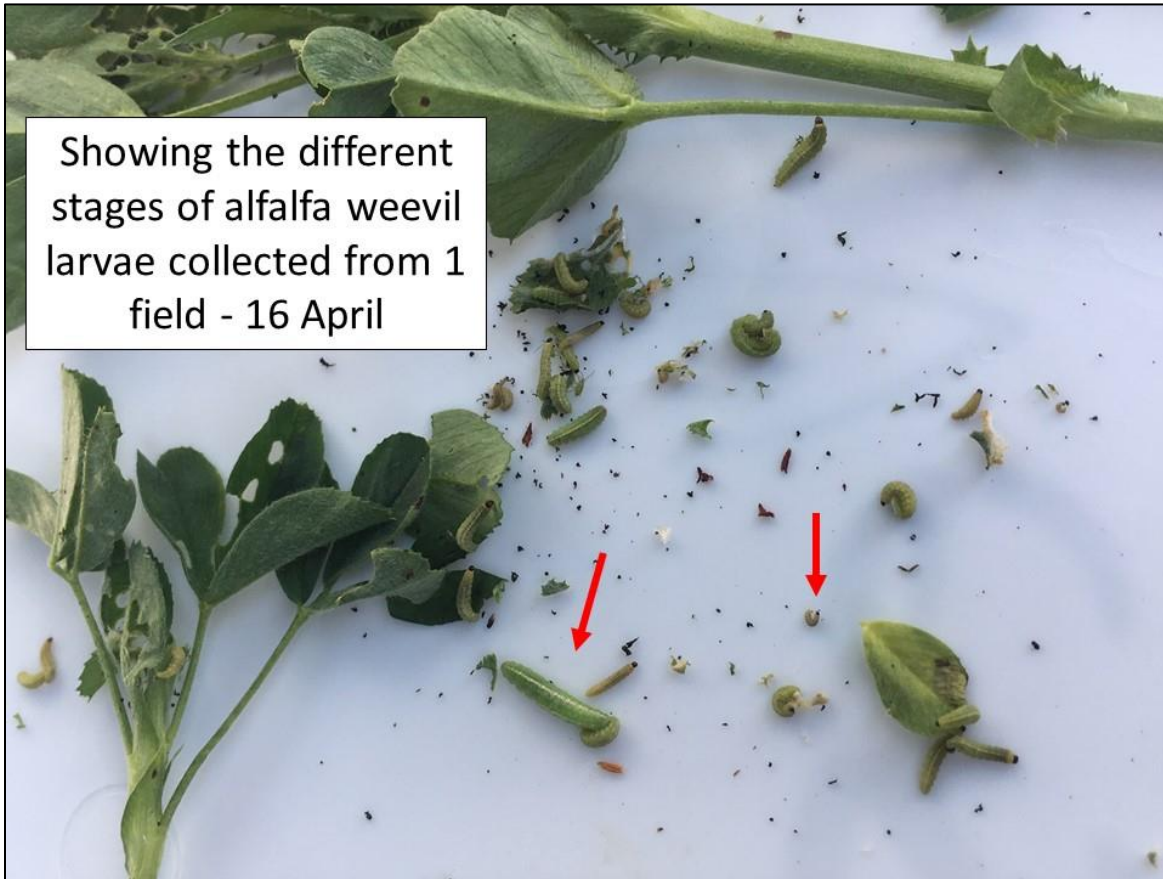
Raymond Cloyd

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Alfalfa Weevil Update

Alfalfa weevil populations seem to have "exploded" around north central Kansas in the past week. Tiny alfalfa weevil larvae were first detected in NC KS on 5 April, but probably a few started hatching a day or two prior. However, the infestation levels that were detected on 5 and 6 April were all well below 10%, and mostly less than 1%. In contrast, fields sampled on 16 April all greatly exceeded 100% infested using the stem shake bucket method and large numbers of different stages of larvae were detected.

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To sample using the shake bucket method, randomly select individual alfalfa stems and quickly and vigorously shake them into a small white bucket. Then, count the number of dislodged larvae in the bucket and divide by the number of stems to get the infestation level. For example, 15 larvae from 10 stems = an average of 1.5 larvae/stem. Do this in several areas throughout each field to get a good indication of the alfalfa weevil infestation level and the stage of development of the weevil. One of the problems with the shake bucket method is that some stems have several larvae/stem while others have none (yet). Thus, the infestation level may appear to be higher than is the actual infestation.

However, in NCKS, with as many larvae as there are already (with more to come probably) and as much damage as we are starting to see in spots, it may be prudent to treat fields as soon as possible.



For information on insecticides registered for use for alfalfa weevil control, please see the KSU Alfalfa Insect Management Guide: <https://www.bookstore.ksre.ksu.edu/pubs/mf809.pdf>

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Kansas Insect Newsletter

April 17, 2019 #2

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