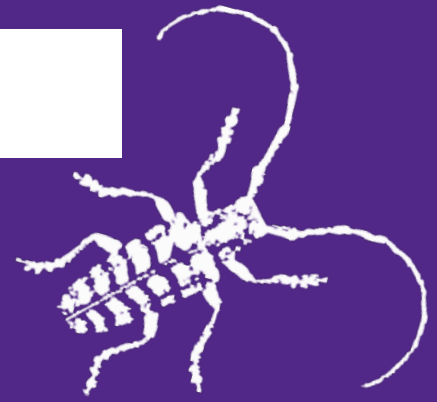


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**May 14, 2021 No 7**

European Elm Flea Weevil  
Do you feel something tick-ling  
Bug Joke of the Week

## European Elm Flea Weevil

We are seeing damage on elm, *Ulmus* spp., trees caused by larvae of the European elm flea weevil, *Orchestes alni*. The larvae are approximately 4 mm (0.16 inches) in length, cream-colored, legless, wrinkled in appearance (Figures 1 and 2), and located in leaf mines. Adults, which will be present later in the growing season, are 3 mm (0.11 inches) long, red-brown, with black spots or markings on the abdomen (Figure 3). Their chewing mouthparts are located on the end of a snout-shaped structure that protrudes from the head. The hind legs are thickened and enlarged, which allows the adults to jump when disturbed. Adults are initially active

Figure 1. European elm flea weevil larva (Raymond Cloyd, KSU)



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Figure 2. Close-up of European elm flea weevil larva (Raymond Cloyd, KSU)

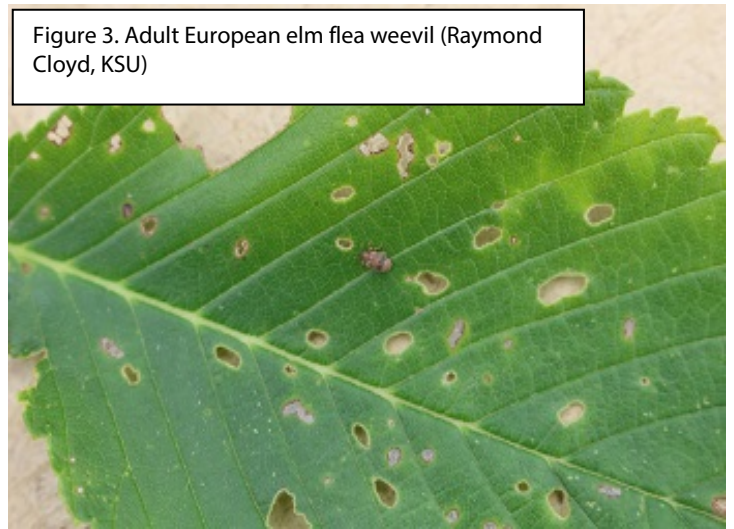


Figure 3. Adult European elm flea weevil (Raymond Cloyd, KSU)

in May, and after mating, females lay eggs in the large mid-veins of new leaves. Larvae emerge (eclose) from eggs and tunnel through the leaf as they feed, creating serpentine-like mines that enlarge as larvae mature (Figure 4). Larvae eventually transition into a pupal stage, and then adults emerge (eclose) from May through June. Adults primarily feed on leaf undersides creating small holes on young leaves (Figure 5). Feeding damage caused by larvae and adults will not kill an elm tree; however, extensive feeding damage may ruin the aesthetic appearance. Adults overwinter under loose bark and in leaf litter located under previously infested elm trees. There is one generation per year in Kansas. Nearly all elm species are susceptible to feeding by the European elm flea weevil; especially Siberian elms (*Ulmus pumila*) and certain elm hybrids with Asian parentage.



Figure 4. Serpentine mines created by European elm flea weevil larvae (Raymond Cloyd, KSU)



Figure 5. European elm flea weevil adult feeding damage (Raymond Cloyd, KSU)

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European elm flea weevil management involves keeping elm trees healthy by implementing proper watering, mulching, and pruning practices. Insecticides may be used to minimize damage; however, insecticides may be difficult to apply to large elm trees. Contact insecticides should be applied from May through June to suppress adult European elm flea weevil populations. Always read the insecticide label carefully to ensure that “weevils” are listed. Thorough coverage of leaf undersides is important because adults tend to feed on the undersides of elm leaves. If damage is not extensive, especially on large elm trees, then there is no reason to apply insecticides. In most cases, the application of an insecticide is not warranted or the insecticide application will be too late to negatively affect the European elm flea weevil population.

For more information regarding European elm flea weevil management, contact your county extension agent or state extension specialist.

Raymond Cloyd – Horticultural Entomology

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## Do you feel something tick-ling?

Encountering ticks is common during outdoor adventures here in Kansas! Many old wives’ tales exist around the best way to remove a tick including burning them, smothering them in petroleum jelly or painting them with nail polish. Here we give you the safest and best way to remove ticks!

Ticks that have not attached to your skin pose no risk, just remove the tick and dispose of it by wrapping it in paper towel and flushing down the toilet or placing it in a sealed plastic bag in the trash. Once you notice a tick that is attached to your skin, remove it as soon as possible. The sooner you remove the tick, the lower your risk of contracting a tick-borne illness. There are many tools available for purchase online, but your fingers or a pair of tweezers work just as well. Using your tweezers (or your thumb and index finger) grab the tick as close to the skin as possible. Pull away from the skin with constant pressure avoiding repeated jerks, twists and pulls. Once the tick is removed, wash the area with soap and water or apply topical disinfectant. Put the removed tick in some rubbing alcohol or in a Ziploc bag placed in the freezer to kill it. We recommend keeping the tick specimen for a few weeks until you are sure that you have not contracted a tick-borne pathogen. If you begin to feel unwell (flu-like symptoms) you can take the tick with you to the doctor for proper identification and if need be, testing. Make a note of when and where the tick was found. Fun fact, sometimes when you remove a tick there is a clear/white hard substance on the tick mouthpart. People sometimes think this is their skin, in fact this is the tick cement cone! This cone is made up of proteins secreted from the tick salivary gland and is there to anchor the tick into the bite site.

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Keep the tick in the freezer or some rubbing alcohol for 2 weeks.

Cassandra Olds – Livestock and Veterinary Entomology

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## Bug Joke of the Week

Q: What do moths study In school?

A. Mothematics

Raymond Cloyd – Horticultural Entomology

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HOME

**Sincerely,**

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