

HOME GROUNDS FACT SHEET

CORNELL

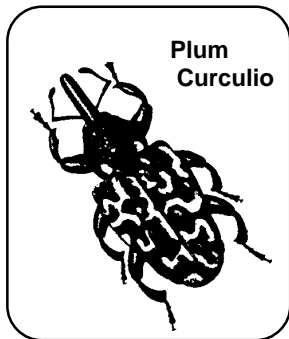
Cooperative Extension
Nassau County



Nassau County
Horticulture Program
Eisenhower Park
East Meadow, NY 11554
516 228-0426

Plum Curculio

Conotrachelus nenuphar



Plum
Curculio

The plum curculio attacks the fruits of plums, cherries, peaches and apples in Nassau County. The adult plum curculio is an inconspicuous, grayish-brown snouted beetle. In spring as the fruit trees are in bloom, the adult beetles emerge from hibernation and begin to invade the

trees. Here they feed on leaves and blossoms until the petals fall and the young fruits begin to grow. Egg laying begins as soon as the developing fruits are exposed. Injury to the fruit results from both feeding and egg-laying activities.

A small crescent-shaped scar is made by the females at the time of egg laying. This characteristic scar serves as an easy means of identifying the work of the plum curculio.

Both feeding and egg-laying scars result in russeted areas on the surface of the fruit and severely injured fruits become misshaped. Egg laying occurs during the three or four weeks following petal fall. Control measures should be applied at this time to prevent crop loss.

The eggs hatch in about a week and the worms bore to the center of the fruit where they feed for several weeks before reaching maturity. The mature worms or larvae have a distinct head and a yellow body that is thick and curved in a "U" shape. Fruit containing larvae drop to the ground, usually during June. They leave the fruit and enter the soil to a depth of several inches. Here they transform to pupae and several weeks later emerge as adults. The adult beetles come up from the soil during August and feed on the fruit until low temperatures force them into hibernation.

Integrated Pest Management (IPM)

Considerations

IPM is a common sense approach to pest control and plant care. It employs a number of measures to prevent,

control or reduce plant problems. These include using resistant plant varieties, proper plant selection and placement, good aftercare and biological and/or mechanical controls. As a last resort, after all other remedies have been explored, a pesticide* that is least toxic to people and natural predators, can be considered. Prior to using any pesticides, plants should always be monitored for the degree of infestation and a sensible control measure considered.

* A pesticide is a substance that kills, or attempts to kill, a particular pest, e.g. *insecticide*, *fungicide*, *herbicide*, etc.

Management

- Pick up all drops in early June.
- Jarring, a mechanical method of control, is sometimes helpful. Results with this method vary. If a tree is suddenly jarred with a padded mallet, the plum curculio beetles loosen their hold, contract their legs, and fall to the ground. Jarring should be done in the early morning. Place sheets on the ground to collect the beetles and then destroy them.
Note: Young trees can be severely damaged if hit too hard.
- Chemical pesticides are available. If you choose to use chemical pesticides, contact your local Cooperative Extension office for specific recommendations.

"This publication contains pesticide recommendations. Changes in pesticide regulations occur constantly and human errors are still possible. Some materials mentioned may no longer be available, and some uses may no longer be legal. All pesticides distributed, sold or applied in New York State must be registered with the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC). Questions concerning the legality and/or registration status for pesticide use in New York State should be directed to the appropriate Cornell Cooperative Extension specialist or your regional DEC office (631) 444-0340. Read the label before applying any pesticide. Cornell Cooperative Extension and its employees assume no liability for the effectiveness or results of any chemicals for pesticide usage. No endorsement of products is made or implied."

B-1-14 DWM:cms reviewed RT 1/03

Building Strong and Vibrant New York Communities

Cornell Cooperative Extension provides equal program and employment opportunities. NYS College of Agriculture and Life Sciences, NYS College of Human Ecology, and NYS College of Veterinary Medicine at Cornell University, Cooperative Extension associations, county governing bodies, and U.S. Department of Agriculture, cooperating.