

# Healthy Choices to Control Lawn and Garden Pests

## ROOT WEEVIL (STAWBERRY ROOT WEEVIL, BLACK VINE WEEVIL)

### What Do They Look Like?

- Weevils are small, oval shaped, hard shelled beetles with small heads
- Strawberry root weevils are shiny, almost black, 6 mm long
- Black vine weevils are brownish-grey or black with yellow patches on their backs, 8 mm long
- Larvae are 1 cm long, whitish, maggot-like grubs with brown heads

### Where Do I Find Them?

- Both types of root weevil larvae are found burrowed in the roots of their favourite host plants
- These host plants include strawberry and other berry plants, rhododendron, azalea, rose, viburnum and conifers such as spruce and pine
- Adult weevils are found chewing on the leaves of plants at night, and hiding under the soil during the day

### Root Weevil Life Cycle

- Larvae overwinter in soil, feeding on roots until mid-May, when they form cocoons
- Adults emerge from cocoons in June and feed on leaves for about 4 weeks, then lay eggs in soil or the leaves of host plants throughout the summer
- The new larvae burrow into the soil and feed on plant roots before burrowing deeper for the winter
- Some adults will overwinter in roots or under brush and leaf litter



### What Does The Damage Look Like?

- Adult root weevils chew leaf edges in a semi-circular notched pattern. Look for these notches on the leaves of host plants
- Larvae feeding on roots can stunt plant growth or kill plants indirectly by allowing disease organisms to attack

### Are Leatherjackets Really A Problem?

- Unless root weevils are quite numerous, they are usually not a problem
- Most plants can handle some damage from root weevils
- Bites out of roots are more serious than chewed up leaves

### What Can I Do? Non-Pesticide Treatments

- Check new leaves for notches. If no notches appear, do nothing
- Hand pick or knock adult weevils off plants at night when they are most active
- Collect them on a light-coloured ground sheet and dump them into a container of soapy water
- Trap adult weevils by attracting them to hiding places

during the day. Use short pieces of board laid flat under plants, or cardboard sheets wrapped around stakes driven into the ground beside plants

- Once weevils are trapped, dump them into a bucket of soapy water
- Catch adults on single stemmed plants or trees by wrapping the stem or trunk with tree gauze and attaching sticky tape available from garden stores. The weevils will stick to the tape and can be disposed of easily

### **How Can I Prevent It Next Year?**

- Avoid mulching over the root crowns of plants. Weevil larvae love to hide in mulch during winter
- Purchase plants that are “weevil resistant,” such as certain varieties of rhododendrons. Talk to a garden professional or local garden centre for advice

### **Tips For A Healthy Garden**

- Ensure soil is healthy well conditioned with organic compost and has adequate drainage (remember that plants get most of their nutrients from the soil)
- Plan your garden so plants are put in areas where they naturally thrive (dry or wet sun or shade)
- Plant in raised beds (good for the plants good for the back!)
- Use native plants that are already acclimatized require low maintenance and have an in-bred resistance to local pests and diseases
- Water deeply but infrequently to maintain a strong root structure
- Protect and attract native beneficial species (give them a place to live and a source of water and they’ll do the rest)
- Practise annual crop rotation for each type of vegetable (keeps patterns of disease or insect invasion in check)
- Fertilize regularly in spring and fall with organic compost

