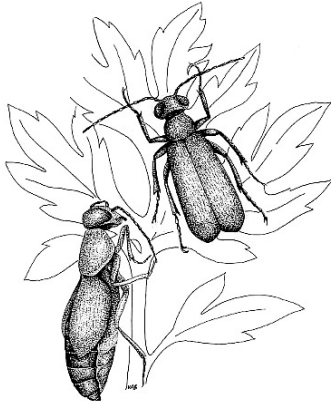


## BLISTER BEETLES

by Eric Day



Blister Beetle adults

**DESCRIPTION:** Many species. Gray, black, or striped. Slender, 1/2 to 3/4 inch long.

**COMMON HOST PLANT(S):** Beet, chard, alfalfa soybean, bean, corn, melon, peas, potato, radish, tomato and turnip. Also feeds on some ornamental plants.

**DAMAGE:** Beetles eat leaves. Larvae do not feed on plants and instead feed on grasshopper eggs and are therefore beneficial.

**DISTRIBUTION:** Throughout United States. Usually occur late in season and the infestations are usually localized.

**LIFECYCLE:** Blister beetles have seven instars and overwinter as mature larvae in the soil. After pupation in the spring, adults begin to emerge in early summer and by midsummer reach their peak population. During summer months blister beetles feed on plant foliage or flowers and mate. Eggs are laid in the soil in groups of 50 to 300 eggs. Ten to 21 days' later larvae emerge from these eggs and search for their preferred food-grasshopper eggs. As larvae molt and grow their activity decreases. When they reach the fifth instar they move into the soil, molt again, and remain overwinter in the soil as sixth instars.

**CULTURAL CONTROL:** Handpick beetles. Wear gloves while picking; the beetles discharge a caustic fluid that may blister the skin.

**ORGANIC/BIOLOGICAL CONTROL:** None known of at this time.

**CHEMICAL CONTROL:** Treat with a registered insecticide and repeat as needed.

**HORSES:** Do not feed hay with dead blister beetles to livestock, especially horses; they can have a severe reaction.