GRASS WEEVIL

The grass weevil, *Trachyphloeus bifoveolatus*, or the crusted root weevil as it is otherwise known, is an introduced species of beetle from Europe. It is not a major economic pest of crops but, due to its habit of entering homes, it has acquired the status of a nuisance pest.

**Life Cycle**

This insect breeds in unkempt fields and pastures and can be a nuisance pest to homeowners living nearby. When adult weevils migrate in the spring and fall they often invade homes in their path. These small beetles are adept at getting inside homes and may be found in substantial numbers on window sills, in cupboards, etc.

*Trachyphloeus bifoveolatus* overwinters as an adult. These adults begin laying eggs in May through mid-June. They deposit these eggs indiscriminately on the vegetation and on the ground. Larvae hatch from late May to mid-June, and pupate after feeding below ground on host plant roots for 3 to 4 weeks. Larvae are typical in appearance for weevils—small (1/8 inch long), “C” shaped, and whitish. Pupae can be found in small earthen pockets within the top 2 inches of soil from late June through mid-August. New generation adults begin appearing in late July, and approximately one month later begin migrating to overwintering sites. Adult beetles are generally a light brown or gray brown, somewhat spherical, and just over ½ inch long. They cannot fly.

**Economic Importance**

*Trachyphloeus bifoveolatus* can occur in large numbers at breeding sites, but because of their small size, neither the larval nor adult stages do any appreciable damage to pastures by feeding. However, they have been known to damage strawberries planted on former pasture land.

In early fall, large numbers of adult weevils can be seen clinging to building walls. They often enter homes, where they become a real nuisance. In the spring, especially in March, homeowners may again notice grass weevils becoming more active and apparently moving to leave the shelter of building structures. These insects are quite harmless and will not damage house furnishings, support structures, stored food, or pets.

**Control**

Grass weevils are not easily killed with insecticides. When they are a nuisance, vacuum or sweep up the beetles and dispose of them in a closed plastic or paper bag in an outside garbage can.* Be sure to dispose of the vacuum cleaner bag after vacuuming, as weevils can escape and reinfest the home. Reduce entry of weevils by using tight-fitting window screens, snug-fitting door frames, and generally “bug proofing” the home.

*Placing the bag in a freezer compartment for a day or two will kill the insects, and thus guard against escapees reinfesting the home.