

Strawberry Blossom Weevil

The strawberry blossom weevil, or 'elephant bug' as it is sometimes called because of its long snout that looks like a trunk, appears to be present on many strawberries especially in the south of England. It is dark brown/black and measures just 2-3mm long. This pest can also attack raspberries and blackberries.



DAMAGE

At flowering time, the presence of a number of capped flower buds which fail to open and shrivel, is the first sign of the presence of this pest. The flower is prevented from opening by the adult weevil boring a hole in the stalk 10mm below the flower bud. Injured buds cease to develop and either fall to the ground or remain hanging from the partially severed stalks. If these capped blossoms are carefully examined, small white grubs may be found inside the flower, feeding on the stamens and ovaries.

Larvae develop quickly and then pupate 'in-situ'. A new generation of adults appear about two weeks later; they then seek shelter in dead leaves, where they remain until the following spring. Adult weevils make characteristic small round holes or 'notches' in the leaves and petals but such damage is unimportant.

CONTROL

Unfortunately there is not an insecticide available to the amateur gardener that is listed for control of this pest, however **Bayer Garden 'Provado® Ultimate Fruit & Vegetable Bug Killer'** which is approved for use on strawberries, blackberries and raspberries may give some level of control. Spray one application onto the tight flower buds and to the surrounding soil to kill both the adults and larvae.

USE CHEMICALS SAFELY: ALWAYS READ THE LABEL

When using chemicals it is most important to follow the manufacturer's instructions precisely. Only use on the fruits that are listed on the manufacturer's label. An accurate weighing machine and measuring cylinder should be obtained. Chemicals can be wasted by making concentrations unnecessarily strong or by making them too weak and ineffective. Furthermore, if chemicals are too strong they may cause damage to the foliage.