

Vine Weevil



Vine Weevil is a very important pest of glasshouse plants. It also attacks soft fruit crops outdoors. Plants grown in containers are particularly at risk. The adult beetles are up to 9mm long with dull black, pear shaped bodies, covered in short yellow hairs which occur in small patches and tend to be worn off as the weevil ages. The larvae are legless grubs, up to 10mm long, creamish to brownish white with a brown head.

DAMAGE:

Both the adult and larvae cause severe damage. The adults can be seen at any time from spring to autumn. They emerge at night and feed on the leaf margins of strawberry plants, but this is rarely serious. However, they lay their eggs in soil near host plants from late July onwards. The eggs hatch about three weeks later and begin to feed on plant roots.

Larval damage is usually seen between early autumn and mid-spring. The larvae live in the soil and feed on the roots, which are either severed or on woody plants that have the outer bark removed. Consequently the plants make slow growth and eventually collapse and die when insufficient roots remain to sustain the plant.

CONTROL

The only insecticides available to the amateur gardener, are for use on ornamental and not edible or fruiting plants.

The best method of controlling the larvae is biologically with the nematode *Steinernema kraussei* (Nemasys 'Vine Weevil Killer'). This nematode can be used outside between March and May or between July and November and is effective when the soil temperature is above 5°C (41°F). For a serious infestation, treat in the spring and again in the autumn. In a greenhouse Nemasys Vine Weevil Killer can be used all year round. The soil or compost must be moist before and at least two weeks after application. The nematode will kill larvae present in the area within two to three weeks.

Adult weevils can be searched for by torchlight in the evening and removed from plants. Vine weevils hide during daylight hours and can be found under pots or on the underside of greenhouse staging. Trapping adult beetles in greenhouses during the day when they are less active can be achieved by leaving moist sacking on paths to provide a hiding place, this sacking can then be removed and destroyed along with the pest. Adult beetles can also be caught by applying insect barrier glue around pots or on greenhouse staging which they then stick to.

Nemasys 'Vine Weevil Killer' and Agralan 'Insect Barrier Glue' are both available from Ken Muir Ltd. Please see our website or ring 01255 830181 for further details.