

Flea Beetles

Flea beetles are commonly found on the leaves of eggplant, but radish, turnip, potato and brassica plants are all susceptible.

Their feeding pattern of creating many small holes on the leaves is normally the first indication of infestation. Young seedlings are most at danger due to loss of leaf structure. Large established plants can usually outgrow the infection.

Appearance

Flea beetles are small, oval shaped, black to brown insects about 1/8" in diameter. Adults will over winter in plant debris and lay eggs in the soil during early spring.

Small, white larvae develop in the soil and will feed on the roots of a host plant. Plants grown from seed are most susceptible to larvae damage.



Prevention and Control

- Flea beetles can be difficult to remove by hand due to their small size and tendency to jump when disturbed.
- Planting a fast growing trap crop nearby can attract the beetles away from your main crop.
- Cover the soil with plastic mulch several weeks before planting to prevent adults from emerging from the soil.
- Apply diatomaceous earth or neem oil on the plant's leaves to combat severe infestations.
- Practicing crop rotation of susceptible vegetables will help reduce infestations from occurring.