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AGRICULTURAL EXPERIMENT STATION
MICHIGAN STATE COLLEGE
Of Agriculture and Applied Science

East Lansing, Michigan

The Cherry Leaf-Beetle

By R. H. PETTIT

An insect that has been common on wild pin-cherry, or as it is sometimes known, the fire-cherry, ever since early times, is the red cherry leaf-beetle, (*Galerucella cavicollis*). Wild cherry is plentiful in the cut-over and burned-over districts of Northern Michigan, and following the successful production of both sweet and sour cherries in this part of the state, the beetle has accepted the cultivated varieties for feeding purposes, often seriously injuring the orchards.

The insect is a small, dark-red beetle, a little less than a quarter of an inch long, oval in form and with dark markings on the body and legs.

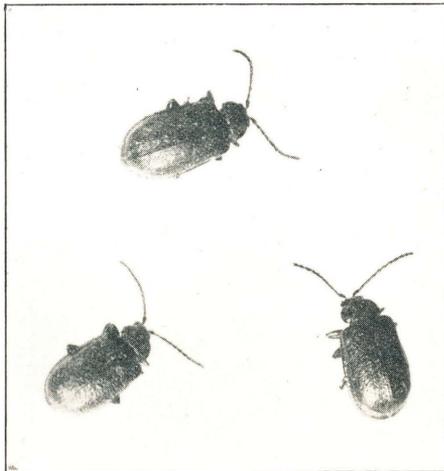


Fig. 1.—Cherry Leaf-Beetle, Enlarged.

Life History. Late in May or early in June the adult beetles come out from their winter hiding places,—usually from under fallen leaves and rubbish of all sorts and commence feeding on the cherry leaves, usually

crawling up the trunks of the trees, until warm weather renders them active, after which they fly more freely. Holes are eaten in the leaves *usually from the under surface*. During June, July, and part of August, eggs are laid just under the surface of the soil and from late June on through August, the eggs hatch into small grubs which feed on the leaves, eating numbers of small holes therein and finally retiring for a short distance under the soil surface or under leaf-mold, after which each one forms a cell in which pupation occurs and from which finally emerges an adult beetle during late July or August.

From this time to about the first of October the beetle feeds on cherry foliage after which time it crawls away under rubbish or into leaf-mold for hibernation over winter.

It appears that while the cherry-leaf beetle feeds both on wild pin-cherry and on the cultivated varieties, still in order for the larvae to pupate, it is necessary that the last larval stage be passed on the wild cherry. Therefore, the presence of wild pin-cherry is essential to the very existence of the pest and therefore, as one would expect it is serious only in localities where the pin-cherry is plentiful.

Control. The control of the cherry leaf-beetle can ordinarily be brought about by a spray of arsenate of lead, applied in the ordinary way, using two pounds of the dry powdered poison to 100 gallons of water, or of bordeaux, and *applied as a spray directed upward from beneath*, remembering that both larvae and adults feed almost exclusively on the under surfaces of the leaves.

The time to apply the poison is when the beetles *first* appear in May or June, before the fruit gets too large. Another spray may be put on after the crop is picked in order to kill the larvae and adults that come in or hatch out later.

The proximity of numbers of wild cherry trees is to be avoided when possible, and the destruction of rubbish,—fallen leaves et al. after the beetles have gone into winter quarters will prove helpful.