

Black Beetle

(*Heteronychus arator*)



Size: 12 -15 mm (Adult)

Colour: Uniformly glossy black.

Pest Status: Larval stage (grub) and adult black beetles cause pasture damage. Not a structural pest but may sometimes enter buildings as a casual intruder particularly in Autumns when mass dispersal flights can occur at night. Not a known vector for food borne illness but presence is objectionable.

Habits: **Food Source:** Plants including largely pasture Lives outside but sometimes enters structures as a casual intruder. Crickets feed above ground, predominately at night.
Harbourage: In and on soil. Adults will hide during day if cover available.

Life Cycle:

The black beetle produces only one generation a year, but the life stages overlap. Go through four stages (egg, grub, pupae and adult) or full metamorphosis.

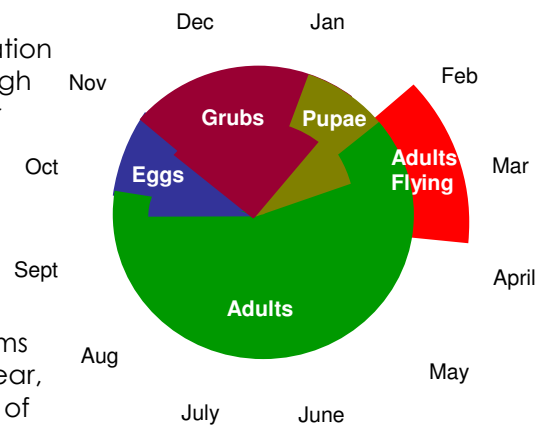
Eggs: One adult female can lay 7-10 white, ovoid shaped, and about 2mm long.

Larvae: Grubs of black beetle most commonly attack pasture grasses, particularly paspalum and ryegrass.

Adult: Adults chew at the base of plant stems
Black beetle has only one generation per year, but it is quite common to find life stages out of phase with the main generation.

The adult black beetle can be found especially from February to May..

Massed dispersal flights often occur in autumn. Adults overwinter in the soil, emerging in spring to start feeding again and to lay eggs. Adults are strong fliers and attracted to lighting especially high mercury but also fluorescents and incandescents. Sodium orange/ yellow lights are less attractive



Distribution: Widespread throughout North Island. More prevalent in the north. Originally from Southern Africa.

Best preventative practices:

Exclusion. Interception and prevention of entry into critical areas is the first and most obvious way to prevent black beetle. Seal all potential entry points with sealant, flashing, compressive strips or other means. Black beetle can squeeze through small cracks and gaps. Repair any holes and gaps in walls, floors etc. Gaps larger than 5mm deep can permit entry. Door and light control (where feasible) is desirable during the flight season.

Sanitation. Black beetle infestations are not a reflection of poor hygiene and sanitation conditions.

Suppression. Inspection, monitoring and treatment of harbourages and entry points in vicinity when detected with approved methods of control. Barrier treatment can assist but it is possible to still enter the structure before succumbing.