

Lily Leaf Beetle

2010 Control Recommendations



Description

The lily leaf beetle is bright red with black legs and appears in May. The adult is about ¼ to 3/8 inch long. Its larva is a small white grub that covers itself in its own excrement as a defense making both stages easy to recognize.

Bring a sample to our office for a free identification.

Damage and Occurrence

This beetle lays eggs and feeds only on lilies that grow from a bulb (Asiatic, Oriental and Tiger lilies) not daylilies. It also feeds on fritillaria, a spring bulb occasionally grown here. Both the larva and adult feed on the leaves and flower buds, ruining the bloom. While it doesn't kill the plant, the loss of blooms is a problem. It does not touch daylilies.

The lily leaf beetle was first found in NY State in Mooers in 2002 and it quickly spread to Plattsburgh. It is now starting to appear in some locations around the state.

Life Cycle

This insect spends the winter as an adult, emerges in spring and feeds, lays its eggs then dies. The larvae hatch in just 4-8 days in late May - early June. This is the most destructive stage. The larvae drop to the soil, pupate and adults appear about 3 weeks later and continue feeding until frost. Mating and egg laying occur in the spring. There is one generation per year.

Control

The adult moves rapidly and is very difficult to control by hand-picking. You can try by holding a jar of soapy water underneath the branch that has beetles. They tend to drop from the branches when disturbed so your goal is to catch them in the soapy water as they drop. Wait a few hours before dumping out the soapy water to make sure they have completely drowned. The larvae are disgusting and difficult to hand-pick.

Because the lily leaf beetle is rather new to the state, few pesticides are registered for use. Check the label to be sure your plant and this pest is listed. Possible products include neem oil, cyfluthrin, imidacloprid, insecticidal soap, or spinosad (Conserve®). Do not use insecticides on plants with open flowers.

Lake Friendly Gardening Tip – Right Plant for the Right Place

Since these beetles only attack lilies that grow from bulbs and fritillaria, consider replacing your lilies with other perennials that aren't affected.

PESTICIDE DISCLAIMER: Every effort has been made to provide correct, complete and up-to-date pesticide recommendations. Nevertheless, changes in pesticide regulations occur constantly, human errors are still possible. These recommendations are not a substitute for pesticide labeling. Please read the label before applying any pesticide and follow the directions exactly.