

More Beetle Damage – Blister Beetles

Damage continues from Green June Beetles and Japanese Beetles, but damage from another beetle has reared its ugly head again this week: Blister Beetles

If you've ever had blister beetle damage, you know that they are known for quickly taking out the leaves of vegetables and ornamentals. Tomatoes are a common target, with damage occurring often before you even know it.

Blister beetles vary in size and color. Most are a half to three quarters of an inch long and are typically black or gray, with some being brown striped. All have an elongated, narrow, cylindrical, soft bodies with middle body part (thorax) narrower than the head or wing covers.

Because of the damage they do to foliage and even tomato fruit, eliminating them is important. Handpicking is a good non-chemical option that can actually be fairly successful. Just be sure to wear gloves. As their name implies, blister beetles can cause blisters on tender skin. They come from a substance in beetles cantharidin, an irritant capable of blistering internal and external body tissues exposed to the chemical.

Chemical control is also possible – and is probably the best option if populations are large. The active ingredients cyfluthrin and permethrin are good options, plus have a zero-day waiting period on tomatoes. As with any pesticide, always read and follow label directions.