



# Cereal Leaf Beetle

## *Oulema melanopus* (L.)

### Coleoptera: Chrysomelidae

The cereal leaf beetle (CLB) is common throughout Europe, the British Isles, North Africa, the Middle East, and parts of Siberia. This beetle has been a serious pest of cereal crops for many years before coming to the U.S. CLB was first identified in the U.S. on July 17, 1962 in Berrien County, Michigan; however, there is evidence that the beetle may have been present in low numbers since the mid-1940s. CLB spread throughout the Midwest and Northeast by the late 1970s. CLB was first found in Malheur County, Oregon in April 1999. CLB is now present in several eastern Oregon and Willamette Valley counties. Larval and egg parasitoids are being released in highly infested areas in a cooperative program by the Oregon Dept. of Agriculture, the United States Dept. of Agriculture, and Oregon State University Extension.

Adults and larvae both cause damage to late-planted winter grains, but are most damaging to spring-planted oats. The beetles also feed on many wild and cultivated grasses including corn, sorghum, timothy, orchard grass, ryegrass, reed canary grass, quackgrass, bluegrass, fescue, millet, rice, brome, wild oats, mouse barley, and foxtail grass. Both larvae and adults feed between the leaf veins, but the adults chew completely through the leaf while the larvae feed on the outer surface leaving behind whitish net-like strips. A single larva can often kill a seedling in the one-leaf stage.




CLB Eggs

Mature CLB Larva

Larval Feeding Damage

CLB Pupa

CLB adults are approximately 3/16 in. long and have shiny, metallic blue forewings and a bright red thorax. The adults spend the winter in leaf litter and duff near infested fields. In the spring, the adults leave the overwintering sites, mate, and begin to lay eggs. Each female CLB can lay between 100 – 400 eggs. The small, yellowish eggs are placed individually on the upper surface of the leaf, and yellow, grub-like larvae hatch in about a week at temperatures near 80°F. To defend against predators, the larvae cover their bodies with a slimy brown substance comprised of mucus and fecal matter. They complete four instars in about 12-20 days at temperatures near 80°F, and then drop to the soil surface. Pupation occurs in earthen cells about 1/2 to 2 inches deep. Adults emerge from the pupae after about 15 – 20 days. These adults then move out of the grain field to protected places and will return to grain fields the following spring to begin the cycle again.

 If You See CLB or Have Questions About CLB,  
Please Contact:

Oregon Department of Agriculture, Plant Division  
635 Capitol Street NE  
Salem, OR 97301-2532  
(503) 986-4636 or 1-800-525-0137  
[oregon.gov/ODA/PLANT](http://oregon.gov/ODA/PLANT)

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Department  
of Agriculture  
635 Capitol Street N.E.  
Salem, OR 97301-2532

