

Discover the Fauna of Our Campus

Colorado Potato Beetle (*Leptinotarsa decemlineata*)

Order: Coleoptera (Beetles)

Family: Chrysomelidae (Leaf beetles)

Genus: *Leptinotarsa*

Species: Colorado Potato Beetle (*Leptinotarsa decemlineata*)




The Colorado potato beetle (*Leptinotarsa decemlineata*) is considered the most relentless enemy of the potato plant. This beetle is known for its rapid reproduction, adaptation to various climatic conditions, and quickly gaining resistance to chemical pesticides. It is approximately 10 mm long with a yellowish-orange, spherical body. Its most distinctive feature is the 10 black stripes on its wings.

Larvae hatching from eggs are initially dark red, turning orange-pink as they grow. They have two rows of black dots on their sides. The larvae are very "appetizing" and eat leaves even faster than the adult beetles. The female beetle lays bright orange-yellow eggs on the underside of the leaves.

Both adult beetles and larvae eat the fleshy parts of the leaves, leaving only the thick veins. A plant whose leaves have been completely eaten cannot photosynthesize; as a result, potato tubers remain small or the plant dries up completely. If not intervened, 80-100% of the harvest can be destroyed.

The beetles spend the winter at a depth of 20-50 cm in the soil. They emerge in the spring as soon as the soil warms up. In windy weather, these beetles can fly and cover distances of tens of kilometers.

When they sense danger, they tuck their legs into their bodies, fall to the ground, and "pretend to be dead." They also secrete a liquid from their bodies that gives off an unpleasant smell and taste for birds, which is why most birds do not eat them.



In small areas, collecting and destroying beetles and larvae by hand, and crushing the eggs under the leaves is effective. Potatoes should not be planted in the same area every year. Some beneficial insects that eat them or certain types of ducks (for example, Muscovy ducks) can be released into the garden. Modern insecticides are used. However, if the same pesticide is used every year, the beetle gains immunity to it, so it is necessary to change the pesticides.

