

(revision date:2/14/2019)

## Potato: Potato flea beetles

Use *Integrated Pest Management (IPM)* for successful plant problem management.

### **Biology**

Flea beetles are small, brown to metallic black beetles with a habit of jumping like fleas when disturbed. They feed on many plants including potato, tomato, radish, spinach, and many weeds. Adults eat small round holes in the leaves, usually early in the season. The larvae typically feed on underground portions of the host plants, causing minor to severe damage in the form of winding grooves on the potato surface or as pinholes bored 1/2" or less into the potato. The holes can serve as entry points for tuber rots and other problems.

### **Management Options**

#### Non-Chemical Management

- ~ Keep garden and adjacent areas clear of weeds which may attract flea beetles.
- ~ Cut away damaged portions of tubers before use.

*Select non-chemical management options as your first choice!*

#### Chemical Management

**IMPORTANT:** Visit *Home and Garden Fact Sheets* for more information on using pesticides

Apply according to label instructions when beetles or damage is first seen. Several applications may be needed.

**Listed below are examples of pesticides that are legal in Washington. Always read and follow all label directions.**

- ~ Bonide Captain Jack's Deadbug Brew R-T-U [Organic]
  - active ingredient: *spinosad (spinosyn A+D)*
  - EPA reg no: 4-472
- ~ Bug Buster-O [Organic]
  - active ingredient: *pyrethrins*
  - EPA reg no: 1021-1771-54705
- ~ Monterey Garden Insect Spray [Organic]
  - active ingredient: *spinosad (spinosyn A+D)*
  - EPA reg no: 62719-314-54705
- ~ Naturalis L
  - active ingredient: *Beauveria bassiana*
  - EPA reg no: 53871-9
- ~ NIMBIOSYS Neem Oil [Organic]
  - active ingredient: *neem oil, cold pressed*
  - EPA reg no: 84181-2
- ~ Safer Brand BioNEEM Multi-Purpose Insecticide & Repellent Conc [Organic]
  - active ingredient: *azadirachtin*
  - EPA reg no: 70051-6-42697
- ~ Safer Brand Insect Killing Soap Conc II [Organic]
  - active ingredient: *potassium laurate*
  - EPA reg no: 42697-60
- ~ This list may not include all products registered for this use.

*Potato: Potato flea beetles*

*Images*



~ Caption: Tuber flea beetle damage  
~ Photo by: R.S. Byther



~ Caption: Tuber flea beetle damage  
~ Photo by: Unknown



~ Caption: Adult flea beetle damage on potato leaf  
~ Photo by: Unknown



~ Caption: Adult flea beetle damage on potatoes  
~ Photo by: S.J. Collman