

A Bug's Life

Blister beetles

Ashgray blister beetle - *Epicauta fabricii*

Striped blister beetle - *Epicauta vittata*

Fun facts

- Contain toxin, cantharidin, which is deadly if ingested and cause blisters
- Larvae are predators of other insects
- Sporadic invasions may happen in July
- Overwinter as pseudo pupae in soil
- Adult feed on flower blossoms and leaves of a wide variety of plants, including vegetables and leafy greens

Identification

Damage: Rapid and massive defoliation due to large number of beetles that descend on plants

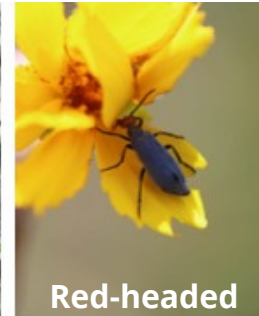
Beetle: 1/2" to 3/4" long, elongated, cylindrical-shaped, leathery, head broader than thorax (look like upside down exclamation point), various colors and patterns

Management

- Inspect vegetable plants daily
- Wear gloves and handpick beetles
- Brush beetles into soapy water
- Control weeds close to garden
- When needed, organic options include spinosad or soil barrier using diatomaceous earth around plant stems; synthetic options include carbaryl, cyfluthrin and permethrin



Striped



Red-headed



Photos: J. Green