

Dasheen beetle

Recognize the problem

The dasheen beetle is also called the taro beetle. This adult dasheen beetle is black, shiny with a hard back. It is 2 centimetres (0.8 inches) long. The larva (worm) is white to grey. The egg is oval, smooth and white. The adult and the worm eat the corm, making tunnels. As a result the corm rots. The leaves may turn yellow, wilt and in severe cases the plant dies within two days. The plant may have several shoots emerging because of the damaged corm.

Background

The beetle cannot live in flooded fields. The adult beetles tunnel into the soil just at the base of the corm where it feeds for about two months.

The adult beetle lays its eggs into the soil. Once the eggs hatch the larva starts feeding on the corm for 3 to 4 months. The adult then flies to another field and continues this cycle.

The adult beetle lives for 4 to 8 months. The dasheen beetle lives in many different plants, such as tannia, sugarcane, banana, sweet potato, yams and eddoes. The beetle is very destructive and difficult to control since they move by night.

Management

- Use planting material free from rot.
- Ensure field is free from grass and rotted corms.
- Observe plants regularly for signs of wilting.
- Do not plant dasheen after crops that the beetles eat, such as tannia, sugarcane, banana, sweet potato, yams and eddoes.
- If fields are replanted, plough field to expose eggs and worms to the sun.
- After ploughing, spray soil with an insecticide to kill eggs and larva.
- Allowing water to remain in the field helps to keep out the beetles.
- Use a light trap to attract adult beetles. Kill the adults using an insecticide.

The three stages of the dasheen beetle from worm to adult. (Photo by ediblearoids.org)



Damage caused by the worm. (Photo by ediblearoids.org)



When using a pesticide, always wear protective clothing and follow the instructions on the product label, such as dosage, timing of application, and pre-harvest interval.

Scientific name(s) > *Ligyris ebenus*

The recommendations in this factsheet are relevant to: Trinidad and Tobago

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