Galerucella

Invasive to Maine

Galerucella Beetle
Loosestrife Leaf Beetle

Upland
Fields, Wetlands, Developed Areas

Adult Form

Mark Schwarzlaender, U. Idaho, Bugwood.org

Look for small (4 to 6 mm) light brown beetles. In the spring overwintering adults emerge from plant litter and soil to feed on new foliage at the top of loosestrife plants.

Habitat

Jil M. Swearingen, USDI NPS, Bugwood.org

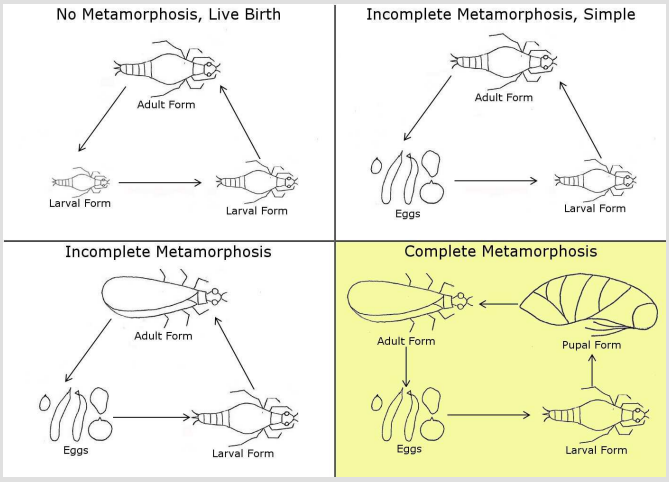
Galerucella beetles almost exclusively eat purple loosestrife. Look for a "shothole" feeding pattern (1-2 mm holes eaten through leaves), especially at the top of loosestrife plants.

Life Cycle Description

B. Blossey: Cornell, L. Wilson: Idaho, Bugwood.org

Adults mate in the spring and females lay eggs. Larvae hatch in early summer, feed on the host plant, and move down plant stems into plant litter or soil to pupate.

Life Cycle Diagram



Larval Form

Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada, Bugwood.org

Look for tiny caterpillars on loosestrife plants with black heads and yellowish bodies. Larvae feed on the underside of leaves causing a "window-pane" effect.

Similar Species

There are two Galerucella beetles in the U.S., Galerucella calmariensis and Galerucella pusilla. They are hard to tell apart, as they look similar and both eat loosestrife. G. pusilla may have a thin dark stripe on its thorax and G. calmariensis has a black triangle or a broad, dark stripe on its thorax.

Fun Fact

In some states Galurecella beetles are used as biological control agents of purple loosestrife. People raise Galerucella beetles and release them in areas with purple loosestrife plants. Within 3 to 5 years the beetles can reduce the health and growth of purple loosestrife in an area.

Researched and created by: Rebecca Martin

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