

Red Headed Flea Beetle Program

Systema frontalis

The Red Headed Flea Beetle is becoming a more prevalent pest in containerized nurseries. Eggs of the beetle are deposited in the soil of pots by the previous year's adults, and grubs hatch in typically the first week of May in Maryland. Grubs feed on the roots of plants, but usually cause minimal damage to root systems. Adults emerge from the soil about three weeks later and start feeding on the foliage of a wide variety of crops. Adult beetles appear between 550-750 GDD, about the same time the orange Soldier Beetles emerge in your area, and also about the same time *Itea virginiana* goes into bloom. The adult stage of the beetle is the most detrimental to ornamental plants, producing a scarring on the upper surface of the leaf. This pest can have up to three generations per year which is why it can be so devastating in an ornamental nursery. This beetle has been seen feeding particularly heavy on *Itea*, *Weigela*, *Forsythia*, *Buddleia*, and some varieties of *Hydrangea paniculata*.

Adult Control

Flagship 25WG – Systemic insecticide, best used 1-2 weeks prior to pest appearing, or spray at first sign of pest, 2-3 repeat applications may be necessary if pests persists, but do not reapply no sooner than every 7 days, do not apply to crops in bloom due to bee toxicity. *8 oz/100 gals*

DuraGuard ME – Apply as a directed spray towards the soil line. Apply with adequate water to wet soil surface thoroughly. Apply when soil is moist but not saturated. Make applications while larvae are active in the soil. *25-50 oz/100 gals*

Safari 20SG – Systemic insecticide, best used 1-2 weeks prior to pest appearing, or spray at first sign of pest, 2-3 repeat applications 14-21 days apart may be necessary if pests persists, do not apply to crops in bloom due to bee toxicity. *8 oz/100 gals*

Talstar – Locally systemic insecticide, best used once the pest appears, 2-3 repeat applications may be necessary if pest persists, do not apply to crops in bloom due to bee toxicity. Talstar can also be sparged onto Harrells fertilizer. *20 oz/100 gals*

Orthene – Best used when pest is present, 2-3 applications may be necessary if pest persists. Drench to the soil when grubs emerge and are visible in the root balls. *16 oz/100 gals*

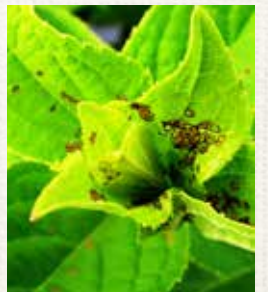
CAUTION: These recommendations are intended as guidelines to develop the grower's own program. Thoroughly read the individual product labels and conduct your own product trials before applying across the crop.



Systema frontalis larvae, note characteristic "hook" on last abdominal segment



Systema frontalis adult



Feeding damage on
Forsythia

Photography by
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