



## Pacific Pests and Pathogens - Mini Fact Sheet Edition

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### Grass leaf beetle (354)



Photo 1. Adult leaf beetle, *Oulema* species.



Photo 2. Hump-backed, black 'blob' of the larvae of *Oulema* species from Fiji.



Photo 3. Damage by the leaf beetle, *Oulema* species to crowfoot grass, *Eleusine indica*.



Photo 4. Damage by the leaf beetle, *Oulema* species, to barnyard grass, *Echinochloa crus-galli*.

### Summary

- Unknown distribution. Recorded only from Fiji on two weeds: crowfoot and barnyard grasses. The *Oulema* species unknown. Another species, *Oulema melanopus*, is recorded from Asia, Africa (north), North America, Europe, as a major pest of cereals.
- Eggs laid on leaf mid-vein; larvae hump-backed, covering themselves in faecal matter. Pupate on soil. Adults with red heads and thorax and black wing cases; often seen 'mate-guarding'.
- Larvae feed on the surface of leaves setting back plant growth so that the grasses are overgrown by other weed species. Damage greatest on crowfoot grass.
- No control measure required. Whether or not the beetles will move to other grasses, i.e., those of the grasslands of western Viti Levu, Fiji, is unknown.
- Alternatively, the Fiji *Oulema* species may have potential as a biocontrol organism attacking particular weed grasses.

### Common Name

Leaf beetle, grass leaf beetle (not an accepted common name).

### Scientific Name

*Oulema* species. The *Oulema* species recorded from Fiji has not been identified. However, the cereal leaf beetle (oat leaf beetle),

*Oulema melanopus*, is a major pest of wheat, barley, oat, and millet, worldwide. In countries where it is not yet present, it is considered a pest of quarantine importance. For these reasons, the Fiji species is described here.

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Information from CABI *Oulema melanopus* (oat leaf beetle) (2017) Crop Protection Compendium. ([www.cabi.org/cpc](http://www.cabi.org/cpc)); and from Cereal leaf beetle. Wikipedia. ([https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cereal\\_leaf\\_beetle](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cereal_leaf_beetle)). Photos 1-4 Mani Mia, SPC, Sigatoka Research Station, Fiji.

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