



Pacific Pests, Pathogens & Weeds - Mini Fact Sheet Edition

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Sweetpotato weevil (029)



Photo 1. Larvae or grubs of sweetpotato weevil, *Cylas formicarius*, damaging a vine at the crown where the stem enters the ground.



Photo 2. External damage to the base of the vine - called the crown - by the sweetpotato weevil, *Cylas formicarius*. Holes used by the adults to exit the stems can be seen.



Photo 3. Crown area of the vine, just above soil level, heavily infested by sweetpotato weevil, *Cylas formicarius*, and rots have developed.



Photo 4. Larvae or grubs of sweetpotato weevil, *Cylas formicarius*, in a storage root.



Photo 5. Adult sweetpotato weevil, *Cylas formicarius*.



Photo 6. Adult sweetpotato weevil, *Cylas formicarius*, caught in a sticky trap.



Photo 7. sweetpotato weevil, *Cylas formicarius*, on the outside of a storage root left on the soil. Note the small feeding pits made by the weevil.



Photo 8. A pheromone trap attracting large numbers of male sweetpotato weevils, *Cylas formicarius*. Note the trap is a plastic bottle with the top 1/3 cut off and inverted. The pheromone has been absorbed onto rubber tubing which is held in place by wire.

Summary

- Worldwide distribution. On sweetpotato and wild *Ipomoea* (morning glory). An important pest.
- Adults lay eggs in base of the stem ('crown') and in storage roots, and larvae tunnel through them. Adults eat the leaves and surface of the vines.
- Damage is the same as done by West Indian weevil. Worse in dry times, and in light sandy soils.
- Spread by adults on the wing, and in cuttings and storage roots.
- Cultural control: early, deep rooting varieties; plant only tip cuttings; remove wild morning glory; hill-up, covering cracks during dry times; ideally, make one-time harvest; 3-4-year crop rotation; after harvest, collect and destroy vines and infested storage roots.
- Chemical control: treat vines (bifenthrin); treat plants in field every 3-4 weeks (bifenthrin or fipronil).

Common Name

Sweetpotato weevil

Scientific Name

Cylas formicarius

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