



Pacific Pests, Pathogens & Weeds - Mini Fact Sheet Edition

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Taro Papuana beetle (030)



Photo 1. Extensive and typical damage caused by taro beetles, *Papuana* sp., in taro corms. These corms are unmarketable.



Photo 2. Damage in a taro corm due to the feeding of taro beetles, *Papuana* sp.



Photo 3. Adult taro beetle, *Papuana* sp. The beetle is about 20 mm long.

Summary

- Narrow distribution. Indonesia, Oceania. On taro, seedlings of oil palm and coconut, giant taro, banana, giant swamp taro, sugarcane, *Pandanus*. An important pest.
- Adult beetles do the damage by boring into the corm. Males are first to arrive awaiting females. After mating, females leave to lay eggs in organic matter.
- Worse where forest disturbed by logging or cyclones.
- Cultural control: destruction of breeding sites suggested, but difficult to find; alternatively, grow a legume cover crops, e.g., *Mucuna*, *Pueraria*, *Glycine*, slash (or use herbicide) to kill it, and then plant taro into the mulch.
- Chemical control: imidacloprid or the pyrethroid cypermethrin at planting, and 3 months.

Common Name

Taro beetle, Papuana beetle

Scientific Name

Papuana species. There are 18 species in Papua New Guinea, 11 of which damage taro; common species are: *Papuana woodlarkiana*, *Papuana huebneri*, *Papuana trinodosa*, *Papuana biroi*, *Eucopidocaulus tridentipes* and *Papuana szentivanyi*.

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Photo 2 Graham Teakle, Canberra. Photo 3 Sada N Lala Taro beetle management in Papua New Guinea and Fiji. Secretariat of the Pacific Community.

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