

Ficus sandpaper cabbage beetle (238)

Summary

- Narrow distribution. Indonesia, Oceania. On *Ficus* (fig) species. A minor pest.
- Larvae strip the surface, mostly on older leaves. (Leaves are boiled or baked as a 'cabbage').
- Eggs laid in circular masses on underside of leaves. Grubs yellow, then black, 12 mm, with obvious hairs. Eat in unison. Pupate at base of tree. Adults brown with reddish heads.
- Cultural control: hand-pick or squash the larvae; or cut off the leaves and branches if too numerous; prune trees making it easier to collect the insects.
- Chemical control: none recommended because of residues, and likely to be uneconomic.

Common Name

Fig-leaf beetles

Scientific Name

The genus is *Poneridia* (family Chrysomelidae); there are several similar species, but not all the species of *Poneridia* feed on figs.



Photo 1. Close-up of damage done by the fig-leaf beetle, *Poneridia*, on sandpaper cabbage.



Photo 2. Egg mass of fig-leaf beetle, *Poneridia*, on sandpaper cabbage. Note the conical eggs taper to a fine point.



Photo 4. The larvae of the fig-leaf beetle, *Poneridia*, become more scattered when the leaf surface has been eaten and they seek fresh food.



Photo 3. The grubs or larvae of the fig-leaf beetle, *Poneridia*, characteristically line up near the edge of the leaf and move across the leaf surface together.



Photo 5. Adult fig-leaf beetle, *Poneridia* species. The male is showing 'male-gating', i.e., preventing his partner from mating with competitors.



Photo 6. Grey patches on leaves of *Ficus* sandpaper cabbage caused by fig-leaf beetle, *Poneridia*, stripping the leaf

surface.

AUTHOR Grahame Jackson
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