

PEST ALERT

Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services, Division of Plant Industry
Charles H. Bronson, Commissioner of Agriculture

An exotic baridine weevil pest (Coleoptera: Curculionidae) of Amaryllidaceae in Florida

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INTRODUCTION: In the spring of 1989, Jemy Hinton (Hillsborough County Cooperative Extension Service) began receiving complaints from homeowners concerning damage to their amaryllis. Specimens submitted to the Division of Plant Industry were determined to be an unknown, but exotic weevil. Further surveying by DPI personnel found the weevil widespread in the Tampa Bay area, including Hillsborough, Pinellas, and Pasco counties. Apparently, the weevil was moved around through bulb exchanges among amaryllis enthusiasts. Since then the weevil has showed up in other Florida counties, but without reports of widespread damage.

IDENTIFICATION: Specimens of the weevil were submitted to Dr. C.W. O'Brien, a weevil specialist at Florida A&M University. He identified it as an undescribed species belonging to an undescribed genus, probably Central American in origin. It remains unnamed to this day.

Adults of the amaryllis weevil are shiny, black beetles about 4 mm in length with a long snout. Being undescribed, this weevil was not included in the most recent publication on North American weevils (Anderson 2002). In the key to baridine weevils in that publication, adults of the amaryllis weevil key to couplet 55, where they agree with neither choice.

BIOLOGY: Little information is known about the life cycle of this beetle. Adults feed on the foliage of amaryllis, especially at the base of the leaves, but adult feeding damage is not as severe as that caused by the larvae which can hollow out bulbs, killing the plant. This beetle probably occurs throughout the year in Florida. Specimens in DPI records are from the following months: January, June, July, August, September, October and December.

DISTRIBUTION: Specific Florida localities for the amaryllis weevil from DPI records and specimens in the Florida State Collection of Arthropods are: **Alachua:** Gainesville; **Miami-Dade:** Miami; **Leon:** Tallahassee; **Hillsborough:** Dover, Lutz, Plant City, River View, Seffner, Tampa, Valrico; **Pasco:** Land O'Lakes, Odessa; **Pinellas:** Clearwater.

COMMON HOSTS: In Florida, it has been recorded from: *Amaryllis belladonna* L., *Amaryllis* sp., *Crinum americanum* L., *Crinum* sp., *Eucharis x grandiflora* Planch. & Linden, *Hippeastrum* sp., *Hymenocallis* sp., *Hymenocallis latifolia* (P. Mill.) M. Roemer, all members of the Amaryllidaceae. A single specimen collected in Miami-Dade County on buttonwood was probably just resting on that plant.

REFERENCE:

Anderson, R.S. 2002. Family 131. Curculionidae Latreille 1802. Pp. 722-815. In: Arnett, R. H., Jr., M. C. Thomas, P. E. Skelley, and J. H. Frank (editors). 2002. *American Beetles. Vol. 2. Polyphaga: Scarabaeoidea through Curculionidea*. CRC Press, Boca Raton. xiv + 861pp.



Fig. 1. *Amaryllis* weevil, dorsal view.
Photo credit: Michael Thomas, FDACS/DPI



Fig. 2. *Amaryllis* weevil, lateral view.
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