

Rhubarb Curculio

by Eric Day and Alexandra Spring



Adult rhubarb curculio. Jennifer C. Giron Duque,
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Description: Yellow dusted snout beetle; 1/2 to 3/4 inch long.

Common host plant(s): Rhubarb

Damage: Punctures stems.

Distribution: New England to Idaho, south to Florida and Louisiana.

Life cycle: The adult rhubarb curculio overwinters in plant debris or protected locations. In late spring adults become active and appear on leaves of rhubarb and alternate weed hosts, such as sunflower, dock, and

thistle. Females lay eggs in plant stalks where larvae emerge in about a week to a week and a half. If eggs are deposited in rhubarb the rapidly growing plant tissue ruptures eggs and, thus, no larvae hatch. However, on alternate hosts larvae hatch from eggs and tunnel down through the stalk. Larvae pupate at the base of host plants in the soil. Adults emerge in a few weeks and feed until temperatures begin to drop when they find suitable hibernation locations. One generation of rhubarb curculio occurs annually.

Cultural Control: Handpick. Remove and destroy dock plants growing near garden; the rhubarb curculio breeds in dock plants.

Organic/Biological Control: No known organic/biological control for rhubarb curculio at this time.

Chemical Control: No known chemical control for rhubarb curculio.