

Pest Alert: Colorado potato beetle (*Leptinotarsa decemlineata*)



Fig 1. Adult Colorado beetle on foliage © Fera Science Ltd



Fig 2. Colorado beetle larva © Fera Science Ltd

- The Colorado potato beetle (*Leptinotarsa decemlineata*) is a serious pest of potato, present in the EU, but **absent from the UK**.
- Originally found in North America, it was introduced to Europe where it has spread widely and is now found in parts of Asia.
- The beetle causes **20-100% reduction in potato yield** through feeding on foliage, and damages aubergines and tomato plants by eating early fruit.
- In May 2015 there was a UK finding linked to imported French potatoes. As well as entering the UK on potatoes, beetles are also occasionally imported as hitchhikers on non-host plant material, such as leafy vegetables, salad leaves, and fresh herbs.
- **Adult Colorado beetles** have a **distinctive yellow and black pattern** and are **10-12 mm in length**. (Fig 1.) The **larvae** (Fig 2.) also have a distinctive look being **round and globular** and **approximately 15 mm in length**.

If you suspect the presence of the pest, please inform the relevant authority (see over for details).

For **England and Wales**, contact your local **APHA Plant Health and Seeds Inspector** or the **PHSI Headquarters**, York.

Tel: 0300 1000 313

Email: planthealth.info@apha.gov.uk

For **Scotland**, contact the **Scottish Government's Horticulture and Marketing Unit**:

Agricultural crops contact the local RPID officer: <http://www.gov.scot/Topics/farmingrural/Agriculture/AOcontacts/contacts>

For non-agricultural crops, email: hort.marketing@gov.scot

For **Northern Ireland**, contact the **DAERA Plant Health Inspection Branch**:

Tel: 0300 200 7847 Email: planthealth@daera-ni.gov.uk

Web: <https://www.daera-ni.gov.uk/topics/plant-and-tree-health>

For additional information on UK Plant Health please see:

<https://planthealthportal.defra.gov.uk/pests-and-diseases/uk-plant-health-risk-register/>

<https://planthealthportal.defra.gov.uk/>

<https://www.gov.uk/plant-health-controls>

<http://www.gov.scot/Topics/farmingrural/Agriculture/plant/PlantHealth/PlantDiseases>

<https://www.daera-ni.gov.uk>