

Bugs & Blights

Sharon J. Collman | WSU Snohomish County Extension

All weevils are cheerfully identified if you send them in a crush-proof container to Sharon J. Collman, WSU Snohomish County Extension, 600 128th St. SE, Everett, WA 98208. Or email clear, close photos to collmans@wsu.edu



Overwintering butterflies

The (morning cloaks, red admirals and anglewings) emerge on sunny warm days to sip winter-blooms and replenish their reserves. They will return to hibernating when cold weather returns. Plants to attract winter butterflies include Daphne mezereum, witch-hazel, winter jasmine, Oregon grape, and early flowering willows and the catkins of alder or birch. Some even go to the leftover rotting fruit and plant sap. Create a cluster of butterfly plants in sunny spot and perhaps the butterflies will sell these plants for you with a sunny day visit.



Damage from the nut leaf weevil is distinctive and maze-like.

Springtails.

Homeowners may call about moving dirt, or living oil, outside their door. This is an aggregation of tiny springtails. They provide ecosystem services by recycling garden litter, compost, and feeding on soil fungi. Springtails gather during periods of cold wet weather, often congregating on puddles, in a bucket or other wet spot. These mating aggregations are like the Daytona Beech for the bug world. They arrive and are gone as quickly, leaving behind just a black stain of their fallen comrades. Springtails get their name from the tail-like appendage that can catapult them out of danger. They rarely cause plant damage. And if they get in the house? Not to worry: they will dry within seconds in a warm dry house.

<http://skagit.wsu.edu/MG/bugs/Springtails.pdf>
<http://whatcom.wsu.edu/mgtemp/classes/vegetables/eb1510.pdf>



Root weevils to watch for. There are 16 root weevils that feed on landscape and native plants in WA and several more if we include OR and ID. Even the usual suspects don't follow the black vine weevil "gold standard" of weevil life cycles. For example, the woods weevil, *Nemocestes incomptus*, is active from fall through most of the winter months and into early spring. (See previous B&B). They have a partial light colored area along the side of the thorax and elytra (wing covers). We also have several root weevils that are relatively new to the Pacific Northwest.



The nut leaf weevil (*Strophosoma malanogrammmum*) is a small and stout weevil, slightly bronze and with a partial stripe on the elytra. It has as distinctive damage pattern that is more like a maze than notched. Find that pattern this weevil is likely to be the culprit.

Dark-eyed weevil. Another new weevil is called the strawberry root weevil in Europe. Well that's confusing since we have our own well-known strawberry root weevil (*Otiorhynchus ovatus*). That's why these complex scientific names were developed: an organism can have many common names but only one scientific name. Dr. Merrill Peterson at Western Washington University calls (*Sciaphilus asperatus*) the dark-eyed weevil for good reason. It has prominent dark eyes, a slightly iridescent brownish-gold color and a dark partial stripe across the hind end. It too feeds are a wide variety of plants.

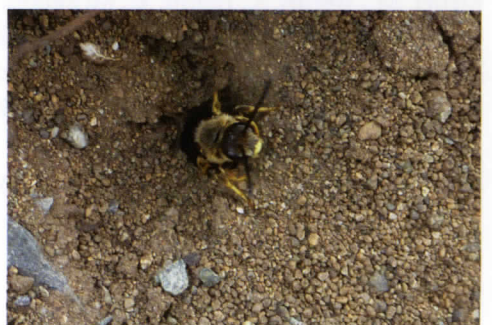
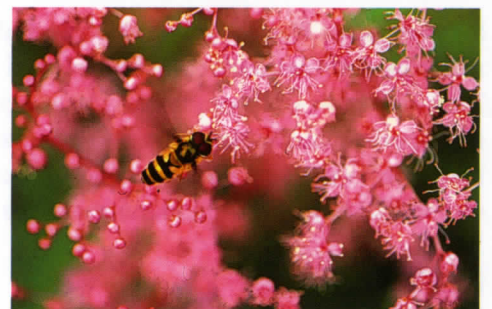
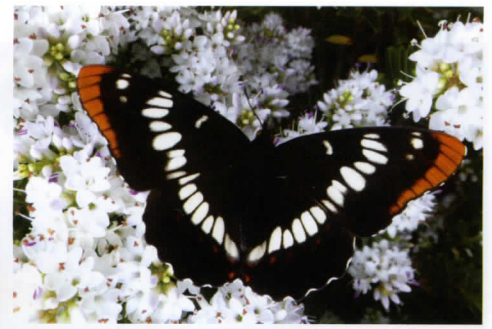


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Crocus provides early pollen for bumblebees



The Landscape Professional's Role in Bringing Back Pollinators

What is in it for you? The answer... Sales of flowering plants, bee nest boxes, designs, landscapes that provide habitat, cover and water for pollinators. As a benefit, we are assured a continued abundance of food and fiber.

The conversion of native landscapes to crops, roofs and cement, the invasions of exotic species, alien diseases and parasites, the misuse of pesticides, and disturbances in climate have all been implicated in significant losses of native bees, flies, butterflies, moths and beetles. These insects pollinate native plants and many of our agricultural and home crops. What the nursery and landscape industry can do is sell a mix of native and garden plants that provide nectar and pollen (especially for very early and late season blooms); emphasize disease and insect resistant plants; remove invasive species from plant lists; provide nesting sites; reduce impermeable surfaces; provide information to ensure proper pesticide use, only when needed and only to target plants. (More: Xerces Society Guide: Attracting Native Pollinators. www.xerces.org/books/)

Solitary nesting bees have no nest to defend, so most of the native bees do not, or are reluctant to, sting. Butterflies provide extra beauty and interest; many flies and beetle pollinators are natural enemies of garden pests or part of the recycling process of breaking down deadwood.

On Right, from top to bottom: 1. Lorquin's Admiral on Hebe. 2. Ahhh! Gardens that look like a nursery. 3. A variety of nest boxes for mason and leaf-cutter bees, aphid hunters and bumblebees. 4. A harmless flower fly forages among flowers - Its larvae are voracious aphid predators. 5. Solitary bee nests in a patch of compacted soil.

Photos provided by Sharon Collman.