

# Corn Flea Beetle

## Overview

The corn flea beetle causes linear scars along corn leaves. They don't usually damage corn directly, but contribute to the bacterial disease Stewart's wilt, which causes wilting, stunting and reduced stand and yield.

## What you should know

- Corn flea beetles acquire Stewart's wilt when feeding on diseased plants. Infected flea beetles then infect new plants by feeding on them.
- Corn flea beetles survive the winter as adults hidden among leaf litter and debris in areas bordering fields. During mild winters, more beetles survive and corn growers should expect more problems with Stewart's wilt.
- The smaller a corn plant, the more vulnerable it is to Stewart's wilt.
- Control of corn flea beetle is only needed until the 7-leaf stage. Though flea beetles may still feed on the corn and infect it with Stewart's wilt after this stage, plants are large enough to tolerate infection without damaging yield or quality.

## Action steps

1. **Plant resistant hybrids:** Planting corn hybrids that are resistant or tolerant to Stewart's wilt is the most effective course of action.
2. **Apply a foliar insecticide when needed:** If planting susceptible varieties in an area prone to Stewart's wilt, insecticides can be used to control flea beetles. Scout fields 2-3 times per week, especially near field edges, from germination until the 7-leaf stage. Treat if you find 6 beetles per 100 plants for susceptible varieties.

[https://www.canr.msu.edu/news/corn\\_flea\\_beetle\\_sweet\\_corn\\_and\\_stewarts\\_wilt](https://www.canr.msu.edu/news/corn_flea_beetle_sweet_corn_and_stewarts_wilt)



*Flea beetles are only a problem until corn reaches the 7-leaf stage.*



## 30-Second Summary

- Corn flea beetles cause limited crop damage themselves, but can infect young corn with Stewart's wilt, which causes reduced stand and yield.
- Use a foliar insecticide if needed up to the 7-leaf stage. After this stage, yield should not be compromised.

## NOTES:

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