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Soldier beetles are not crop pests

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Soldier beetles are not crop pests

Abstract

Soldier beetles can be common in Iowa crops, especially corn and alfalfa, but they do not feed on either of these crops or soybeans. These beetles are known as leather wings in some regions of the U.S. and they somewhat resemble lightning bugs or fireflies, but they lack the light-producing organ on the abdomen and the head is not tucked under the pronotum.

Keywords

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INTEGRATED CROP MANAGEMENT

Soldier beetles are not crop pests

Soldier beetles can be common in Iowa crops, especially corn and alfalfa, but they do not feed on either of these crops or soybeans. These beetles are known as leather wings in some regions of the U.S. and they somewhat resemble lightning bugs or fireflies, but they lack the light-producing organ on the abdomen and the head is not tucked under the pronotum. The head, pronotum and wing covers are a mixed color of black and orange. The adults are common on blooming plants including goldenrod, milkweed and sweet clover. There they eat pollen, nectar and small insects. The larvae feed on grasshopper eggs, small caterpillars and other soft-bodied insects. It is not known whether or not they will eat soybean aphids.



Margined soldier beetle with striped wing covers.

[Enlarge](#) [1]



Margined soldier beetle with spotted wing covers.

[Enlarge](#) [2]

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[1] http://www.ent.iastate.edu/imagegal/coleoptera/cantharidae/soldier_beetle_2.html

[2] http://www.ent.iastate.edu/imagegal/coleoptera/cantharidae/soldier_beetle_3.html