Wingless weevils in the garden

S. C. Gordon
Scottish Crop Research Institute, Invergowrie, Dundee, DD2 5DA, Scotland, UK
http://www.scri.sari.ac.uk

What are wingless weevils?

Wingless weevils are a group of flightless beetles (Coleoptera) that feed on a wide range of plants.

Vine weevil (*Otiorhynchus sulcatus*) (7-10mm).
- The most damaging weevil in horticulture.
- Very wide host range (more than 140 plant species).
- Very important in glasshouses, on fruit plants and ornamentals.
- Very common.

Clay-coloured weevil (*O. singularis*) (6-7mm).
- More localised than vine weevil - adults damage raspberry, ornamental and fruit stocks.
- Common in Scotland.

Less common wingless weevils

- Strawberry weevil (*O. ovatus*) (4.5-5.5mm).
- Strawberry weevil (*O. rugosostriatus*) (5-7mm).
- Red-legged weevil (*O. clavipes*) (8-12mm).
- Strawberry weevil (*O. rugifrons*) (4.5-6mm).
- All feed on a range of crops but are associated with strawberries.

Life cycle

- Most are parthenogenetic (no males).
- Up to 1000 eggs laid in soil close to host plants.
- Larvae hatch and feed on roots, some causing severe damage.
- They pupate when fully fed. Adult clay-coloured weevils emerge in April/May - Vine weevils later in May/June
- Adults feed on leaves, causing characteristic notching.

Control

Chemical.
Chemical control by insecticides now difficult - most currently available products have little effect.
- Composts with added slow-release insecticides are used to give up to 2 years protection in high value horticultural plants.
- Insecticide applied as drench now available for gardener for use on non-food plants

Natural.
- Insect-attacking fungi work in some conditions.
- Insect-attacking nematodes can be effective in warmer environments.
- Ground beetles feed on weevil eggs and larvae and help to reduce numbers.
- Chickens, Quail and game birds eat weevil adults and may reduce damage.

Distribution worldwide

The approximate geographic distribution of the main wingless weevils.