

ELM LEAF BEETLES

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Adult elm beetles are about 1/4 inch long and yellow to olive green with a dark stripe down each side of their wing covers. There are usually four dark spots on the body segment right behind the head.



The orange eggs are spindle-shaped and the larvae are wormlike, black or black and yellow and up to 1/2 inch long. The pupae are orange-yellow with black bristles.

Adult elm leaf beetles overwinter in protected locations, often in houses or other structures. They emerge in the spring and move to elm trees where they lay their eggs in groups of 5 to 25 on the underside of leaves. The larvae skeletonize the leaves making them appear netlike. Elm leaf beetle larvae often move to the base of the tree in large numbers to pupate. There are two complete generations per year.

Elm leaf beetle adults move into buildings in the fall to seek hibernation sites. They cause no damage but large numbers of them can be a nuisance.

The most effective control of elm leaf beetles is accomplished by controlling the larvae or adults while they are still on the tree. They can be controlled using sprays of insecticidal soap, light horticultural oils, Astro, Azatin, Conserve, Lawn and Garden Multi-Insect Killer, Orthene, or Sevin. Treat when leaves are first fully expanded in the spring and again in July.

Pest Proofing—

Elm leaf beetles may enter homes and buildings in their search for overwintering sites in the fall. Seal exterior cracks and openings as a long-term, preventive measure.

Adjust or install tight-fitting door sweeps or thresholds at the bottom of all exterior entry doors. Gaps of 1/8" or less will permit entry of these beetles and other insects. Garage door bottoms should be fitted with a bottom seal constructed of rubber (vinyl seals poorly in cold weather). Gaps under sliding glass doors may be sealed with foam weatherstripping.

Seal utility openings where pipes and wires enter the foundation and siding, e.g., around outdoor faucets, receptacles, gas meters, clothes dryer vents, and telephone/cable TV wires. Holes can be plugged with caulk, cement, urethane foam, steel wool, or copper mesh.

Caulk cracks around windows, doors, siding, and fascia boards. Use a good quality silicone or siliconized acrylic latex caulk. Although somewhat less flexible than pure silicone, siliconized latex-type caulks clean up with water and are paintable. Caulks that dry clear are easier to use than pigmented ones because they cover mistakes.

Repair damaged window screens and install insect screening behind attic vents. These practices will also help prevent entry of other pests, such as flies, mosquitoes, and lady beetles.

Elm leaf beetles that successfully gain entry into the home can be eliminated by vacuuming them up from under carpets or other harborage areas or by using short residual contact insecticides such as pyrethrins to kill them.

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