# *Native Fig Leaf Beetle*

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| **Common Name** | Native Fig Leaf Beetle | | |
| **Genus / species** | *Poneridia semipullata* | **Order** | *Coleoptera* |
| **Subfamily** | **Chrysomeloidae** | **Superfamily** | **Chrysomeloidea** |
| **Life cycle** | As with all beetles these undergo a complete metamorphosis. The eggs are laid on the leaves; pupation occurs in the ground. There are several generations each year with populations reaching their peak during the warmer months. | | |
| **Host** | Predominately *Ficus rubiginosa* but occasionally observed on other species of Moraceae. | | |
| **Identifying features** | • Adult – light brown beetle approximately 10-12mm long. Dark brown spot at the junction of the thorax and the head a dark margin on each shoulder of each elytron, comparatively hairless.<br>• Larvae – dark brown, early instars have a hairy appearance from small pieces of leaves that are stuck to its body.<br>• Eggs – clusters of cream coloured eggs 1-2mm long. | | |
| **Symptoms** | Adults eat irregularly along the leaf margins leaving the midrib.<br>Early instar larvae skeletonise the leaves and later instars usually chew along the leaf margins. Populations can rise rapidly resulting in complete defoliation. | | |
| **Signs** | Leaves of *Ficus rubiginosa*, between spring and late autumn, with skeletonised leaves or chewed leaf margins. | | |
| **Chemical / biological Control** | • Imidacloprid based products are effective and have a warning label rather than a poison label. This is a systemic chemical and is effective on both the larvae and adult and can be readily sprayed to 6 metres in height using standard hand operated spray units.<br>• Several strains of the bacteria Bacillus thuriengensis are effective in the control of Coleoptera. | | |
| **Other control measures**[1] | • The eggs are parasitised by a very small native wasp (from the Inostemninae family). The larvae are parasitised by a wasp (from the genus *Aridelus*). The larvae are eaten by the male scorpion fly (*Harpobitticus* spp.)[2]<br>• The beetle is a poor flyer seldom getting more than 6 metres above ground. As a defence mechanism, it drops rapidly to the ground and frequently climbs and makes a series of short flights to ascend.<br>• As a result, trees which have branches that touch the ground, or that are in direct contact with foliage on the ground, are more susceptible to damage. Raising the canopy reduces the incidence and severity of damage when compared to similar trees where canopy connection is maintained.<br>• Likewise, since lower branches are often damaged first, eggs beetles and larvae that are found on these branches can be readily removed by hand. Performed weekly, hand removal will generally provide enough control to avoid the need to treat chemically. | | |

**References:**


www.answers.com

The Insects of Australia – A Textbook for Students and Research Workers Sponsored by *The Division of Entomology Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organization Australia* - Melbourne University Press – 1979


[1] Based on 6 years of weekly observations of more than 100 *Ficus* within the Homebush Olympic precinct.

[2] Probable family or genus of observed activity based on references in The Insects of Australia.

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Fist instar larvae and damage



Damage caused by adults



Beetle and pupation hole



Distinct markings on head and elytron



Adult beetle

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