

# Watch for Early-Season Bean Leaf Beetles in Soybeans

## KEY POINTS

- Potential for yield losses exist in early-planted soybeans and in fields that are isolated from other soybean fields.
- Fields at risk should be monitored closely after planting.
- Control may be accomplished with use of seed treatments as well as foliar insecticides.

## Impact on Your Crop

- The potential for economic damage may occur when bean leaf beetle (BLB) feeding damages the growing point or cotyledons of soybean before the unifoliate leaves emerge.
- Yield losses may also occur when BLB feeding results in excessive defoliation (30-50% or more) of pre-bloom soybean.
- BLB can transmit bean pod mottle virus (BPMV), with early infection posing the greatest risk of potential yield loss.

## Scouting

- Scout for adult BLB as soon as soybeans emerge (Figure 1).
- Seedling stage scouting requires a determination of the number of beetles per foot of row or per plant. Drop cloths or sweep nets can be used, and sampling should occur at five different locations throughout a field. Also note the extent of defoliation when counting beetles.
- Management thresholds vary by region and recommendations can be found in your local University Extension publications or by contacting your Extension entomology specialist.

## Management Options

- Insecticidal seed treatments help protect seedlings from early-season BLB feeding.
- If an insecticide seed treatment was not used, a foliar insecticide treatment may be warranted when BLB feeding appears to be injuring or clipping the cotyledons and growing points of soybean, or when economic thresholds have been reached.
- For prevention of BPMV transmission, one approach is to use a seed treatment or foliar insecticide to protect seedlings from overwintering adults followed by a foliar insecticide targeted against first generation adults.

### Sources:

Hunt, T. and Jarvi, K. 2012. Scout early emerging soybeans for bean leaf beetles. University of Nebraska-Lincoln CropWatch. <http://cropwatch.unl.edu>.; Davidson, D. 2016. Watch for bean leaf beetles. Illinois Soybean Advisor. <http://ilsoyadvisor.com>; Varenhorst, A. 2017. Bean leaf beetles: early season soybean defoliators in 2017. South Dakota State University Extension IGrow publication. <http://igrow.org>. Web sources verified 02/01/18.



Figure 1. Bean leaf beetles can vary in color (light yellow or tan is most common) and are about 1/4 inch long. They can have 2 or 4 black spots on their backs, and a black border on the outside of each wing cover; however, these markings may be absent. Note the characteristic black triangle behind the head on both beetles above.

**Individual results may vary**, and performance may vary from location to location and from year to year. This result may not be an indicator of results you may obtain as local growing, soil and weather conditions may vary. Growers should evaluate data from multiple locations and years whenever possible. **ALWAYS READ AND FOLLOW PESTICIDE LABEL DIRECTIONS.** All other trademarks are the property of their respective owners.  
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