

Aphthona flava

Flea beetle

Weed(s) Attacked: Leafy Spurge
SCNWCB February 2006

GENEALOGY

Original sources for U.S. release was Italy and Hungary. First U.S. releases made in 1985. Now established in numerous states, especially Montana.

LIFE CYCLE

Eggs are deposited in June through early fall on the plant stem at or just under the soil surface. Larvae hatch and actively feed on roots from July through the winter, and into the following spring. Larvae are so small that a microscope is generally needed to see them. Depending on the climate of a particular site, adults may emerge from June through early fall. Adults are about 4mm long, and will jump when disturbed.

EFFECT

Both adult and larvae damage the plant. Adults feed on leaves and flowers. Larvae feed in and on roots hairs and young roots.

REDISTRIBUTION

This agent is not yet established in Stevens County.

COMMENTS

Aphthona flava was the first flea beetle to be released against Leafy Spurge in the United States. Around Bozeman Montana it's effect has been spectacular. There are numerous species of the *Aphthona* flea beetle. All have similarities in life cycle and habit, but some are better adapted for certain soil type, moisture regime, plant community, and exposure.

The most heavily infested Leafy Spurge areas in Stevens County are found on rugged, dry, hot, sandy sites in southern Stevens County. Efforts to establish this agent there started in 2001. Each year large numbers (a mix of species) have been released, but have thus far failed to establish in Stevens County. Efforts will continue.

