

Pest Profile



Photo credit: Lyle Buss, University of Florida, Bugwood.org (Left) Doug Caldwell, Univ. Florida, Bugwood.org (Right)

Common Name: Palmetto Weevil

Scientific Name: *Rhynchophorus cruentatus* Fabricius

Order and Family: Coleoptera, Curculionidae

Size and Appearance:

	Adult	Egg	Larvae/ Nymph	Pupae
Length (mm)	19 -30 mm			
Appearance	Adults come in a diverse variety of colors ranging from almost completely red with a variable black pattern to solid black. Male rostra (snouts) are relatively straight and covered with small bumps. Females have a ventrally bowed, smooth and tapering rostrum.		Larvae are creamy to yellowish in color, legless, with a dark brown and hard head capsule containing large mandibles. These grubs can be very large and can weigh close to 6 grams	

Type of feeder (Chewing, sucking, etc.): Chewing mouthparts

Host plant/s: Cabbage palmetto (*Sabal palmetto*), Saw palmetto (*Serenoa repen*)

Other introduced species have been found with larval infestations including the Canary Island date palm (*Phoenix canariensis* Hortorum ex Chabaud), and *Caryota* sp., bismarck palm (*Bismarckia nobilis* Hildebrandt & H. Wendl.), *Pritchardia* sp., *Washingtonia* sp., royal palms (*Roystonea* sp.), *Phoenix dactylifera*, latan palms (*Latania* spp.), coconut palm (*Cocos nucifera* Linnaeus), and Florida thatch palm (*Thrinax radiata* Lodd. ex Schult. & Schult. f.)

Description of Damage (larvae and adults): Adult females lay eggs in the leaf bases of the crown, the larvae then tunnel into the heart, eventually destroying the palm tree. In upright palm species (e.g. Canary Island date palm), older leaves start to droop during the initial stages of infestation and then quickly collapse. As the infestation continues, damage from larval feeding and subsequent rot becomes so severe that the top of the palm falls over due to the integrity of the crown being compromised, a condition that is known as “popped neck.” Detecting this pest early proves to be difficult, and often treatment that is initiated after they have been discovered is not enough to save the tree since apical meristem damage is too severe.

References:

Cranshaw, W. (2004). Garden insects of North America: The Ultimate Guide to Backyard Bugs. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Weissling, T. J., & Giblin-Davis, R. M. (1997, August). Palmetto weevil - *Rhynchophorus cruentatus* Fabricius. Retrieved January 16, 2016, from http://entnemdept.ufl.edu/creatures/orn/palmetto_weevil.htm