



Hoplia Beetle

The hoplia beetle (Family Scarabaeidae: *Hoplia callipyge*) can be quite abundant on roses in California's Central Valley during the spring months (March-May). It is small (about 1/4 inch long), reddish-brown, with fine scales that make them appear iridescent silvery-green in sunlight. It is a relative of the June beetle, which is another pest here in California, and is often confused with the Japanese beetle, which is not in California.

Females of the hoplia beetle lay eggs in pastures, alfalfa fields, and other areas of undisturbed vegetation in late spring and early summer. Larvae are small and crescent-shaped. They live in the soil feeding on decaying vegetation and plant roots. At this point in the life cycle they do not do damage to woody plants. The larvae mature slowly and usually overwinter in the larval or pupal stage. In early spring they complete their development and emerge as adults.

Adult hoplia beetles are attracted to light colored flowers and are most often pests of yellow and white roses, but also can be found on citrus flowers, irises, lilies, peonies, magnolias, and poppies. Once in your garden, they may move to darker colored flowers. The beetles chew round holes in petals and can destroy unopened flower buds. They do not eat the leaves of rose plants.

The most effective way to manage adult hoplia beetles is to hand-pick them off of the flowers they are eating and dispose of them in a bucket of soapy water. You also can prune the flowers that are infested with the beetle and dispose of them in the same way. Some California residents have had success in controlling the

hoplia beetle by placing white, 5-gallon buckets in their gardens filled with water and a drop of liquid soap to break the surface tension. The beetles are attracted to the light color of the bucket and drown in the water. Replacing light colored roses with darker varieties is another effective control measure.

Spraying chemical pesticides is not recommended. Adult beetles often are protected from sprays within the blossom, and larvae live underground away from the garden. Systemic insecticides applied at the roots often are not concentrated enough in the blossoms where the adults feed.

The best news about the hoplia beetle is that it produces only a single generation per year. If you can endure several weeks of infestation from late March to early May your roses will be free of the hoplia beetle.

