

Forewarning of May-June beetle

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Incidence of May- June beetle, *Holotrichia serrata*, was reported in some gardens in 2 villages of Sidlaghatta CPP cluster. The loss due to the beetle attack is estimated to be 20%. The beetles came in large groups after dusk and fed on tender parts of mulberry including the bud causing severe damage to the garden. About 9 or 10 beetles can be found eating a single leaf causing severe damage in a day itself.



Adult May-June beetle feeding on mulberry



Grub of May-June beetle

Morphological features

The beetles look dark brown in daylight with gray coloured hair all over the body. The abdomen is white. When disturbed and in bright light, they change their colour to light brown and regain their original colour in darkness. The adults are stout and measures 2.5-3 cm in length and 1- 1.5 cm in width.

Life cycle

These beetles emerge immediately after the monsoon showers. Hence the name May-June beetle. This beetle completes its life cycle in one year. The female lays eggs in moist soil at a depth of 5-6cm. The larval stage is called as white grubs and the fleshy grubs feed on the roots of various crop plants such as sugarcane, groundnut, cowpea, ladies finger, rose, mulberry etc. The damage to sugarcane and other crops by the grub is noticed during July-September. The grubs have three developmental stages. Later they pupate in the soil in earthen chambers. The adults emerge from the soil during night hours and feed on the leaves of trees like jack fruit, neem, mulberry, Acacia, Ailanthus etc.,

Management

Mechanical

1. Farmers can visit mulberry gardens during night hours with strong lights and the adult beetles feeding on mulberry leaves can be collected in gunny bags and can be destroyed either by dipping in kerosene water mixture(1:50) or by burning.
2. By using light traps in mulberry gardens the beetles can be collected, the trapped beetles should fall into a basin having kerosene water mixture(1:50) which will kill the beetles.
3. During evening hours fresh neem branches can be put on mulberry plants. As neem is the preferred food plant the beetles will get attracted to it and can be collected easily and destroyed as mentioned above.
4. Deep ploughing of the mulberry gardens will help in exposing the egg and grub stages of the insect to sunlight and predators like birds.

Chemical

1. In case the age of the mulberry garden is within 15-20 days the neem branches can be treated with Monocrotophos (2ml/l) and can be kept on the mulberry plants. The beetles which feed on the treated neem leaves will die.
2. The mulberry gardens within 15-20 days after pruning, also can be treated with 0.1% Rogor (3ml/l).