



Pest Control Information Sheet

May Bug or Cockchafer: *Melolontha melolontha*

Description



These beetles are red-brown in colour and vary from 25 to 30mm in size. They are heavy-bodied beetles and have shiny wing covers.

They are relatively common, but can cause alarm when seen for the first time.

Adult cockchafers feed on forest and fruit tree leaves, in particular oaks, beech, maple, sweet chestnut, walnut and plum. They can sometimes cause considerable damage to vegetation.

Life Cycle

The adults appear in April-May (hence the common name May Bug) and fly, singly, particularly at dusk towards a feeding site. They are attracted to lights.



Female cockchafers bury up to 200 small eggs in soil. The larva takes three years to mature into an adult cockchafer and whilst in the larval stage, when they are known as 'white grubs', can destroy crops by attacking the roots. Crops affected can include cereals, potato, strawberries, meadow grasses, fruit or forest trees.

The larva, after three years is 40-46mm in length, with a white body, which is curved, and a blackish extremity to the abdomen.

The Borough Council's Pest Control Service does not provide a treatment service to treat this garden pest.

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