

COTTONWOOD LEAF BEETLE—*Chrysomela scripta*

HOSTS: Willow and cottonwood and other poplars

IDENTIFICATION, LIFE CYCLE, AND DAMAGE: Young larvae are black. Mature larvae are blackish with two white spots on each side and are about 12 mm long. Adult beetles are 6 mm long, and have black heads and yellowish wing covers with black stripes.

Beetles overwinter as adults under loose bark and debris, or in clumps of grass. In early spring, they emerge and feed on new leaves and tender bark. Females lay clusters of yellow eggs on the underside of leaves. Young larvae feed gregariously; older larvae feed alone.

Adults and larvae skeletonize leaves throughout the remainder of the spring and summer. There are two to four generations per year. Severely defoliated trees are weakened and unsightly.

CONTROL: Spray leaves with carbaryl or chlorpyrifos to kill adults and larvae. However, these insecticides also will kill beneficial lady beetle predators that feed on eggs and pupae of cottonwood leaf beetles.



Cottonwood leaf beetle larvae and damage



Cottonwood leaf beetle adults and damage