

CARAGANA BLISTER BEETLE—*Epicauta subglabra*; ASHGRAY BLISTER BEETLE—*E. fabricii*

HOSTS: Caragana (Siberian peashrub), honeylocust, pines, and other trees and shrubs

IDENTIFICATION, LIFE CYCLE, AND DAMAGE: Young larvae are long-legged and about 2 mm long. Older larvae are mummy-like and 7 mm long. Adult beetles are gray to black, soft-bodied, elongated, and 12 to 20 mm long. The segment directly behind the head is constricted giving the appearance of a neck.

Larvae live in the soil and eat grasshopper and other insect eggs. Mature larvae overwinter in the soil and pupate in early spring. Adults emerge in late May or early June and immediately begin feeding on the foliage. In the fall eggs are laid in the soil.

The beetles are voracious feeders that feed in groups or swarms; even moderate populations can cause extensive defoliation. The body fluids of most blister beetles contain cantharidin, a chemical

substance capable of producing large, watery blisters if allowed to come in contact with the skin. These beetles are toxic to mammals if eaten. Horses have died from eating beetles that were entrapped in bales of alfalfa hay.

CONTROL: Spray foliage and beetles with carbaryl or methoxychlor when large numbers are seen in late May, June, or July.



Epicauta sp. blister beetle