

BLISTER BEETLES Coleoptera: Meloidae *Epicauta maculata*, *E. fabricii*,
E. puncticollis, *Lytta nutalli*

DESCRIPTION

Four species of blister beetles may damage potatoes: the spotted blister beetle, the ashgray blister beetle, the Nuttall blister beetle, and the punctured blister beetle. **Adults** vary in length from about 15 mm to 28 mm and appear narrow and elongate with conspicuous heads and necks. The wing covers are soft and do not completely cover the tip of the abdomen. These beetles are called blister beetles because body fluids that get on the skin may cause small blisters to form. The beetles often cluster on the tops of plants usually in small areas of the field. Adult feeding injury causes leaf ragging and stunted plants. **Larvae** are predators on grasshopper eggs in wasteland areas or are found in ground-nesting bee nests where they feed on bee eggs.

LIFE HISTORY

Larvae overwinter in uncultivated areas along roadsides, ditches, and areas adjacent to rangeland or desert areas. Larvae undergo development during the winter from late September to late March. Pupation occurs in April and adults begin emerging in early May. Adults are usually abundant only in areas adjacent to rangeland or desert areas where larvae have overwintered. Adults are strong flyers and often fly from an area before damage is detected and controls can be applied.

IMPORTANCE

Adults feed on potato leaves causing a ragged appearance. Feeding injury is rarely economically important and control is seldom if ever necessary.



Green blister beetle adult



Gray blister beetle adult

