

Section I. Invasive and Emerging Pests

DAMAGE TO HELIANTHUS SPECIES BY “IRONWEED” WEEVILS

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The term “Ironweed” via Ironweed Weevil actually includes any of the woody Asters common to range and cultivated plants with colorful flowers. Older floras use Ironweed while newer ones tend to use aster.

Helianthus annuus ssp. *lenticularis* (Sunflower) Douglas is the common wild sunflower found in the temperate regions of North America. *H. annuus macrocarpus* Chll. Is the larger sunflower ssp. with flower size ranging from 25 to 300+ cm. The so called Giant Sunflower belongs to this sunflower ssp. as does the smaller commercially grown Black Oil Seed Sunflower.

Another “Ironweed” is Cocklebur, *Xanthium strumarium*, a weed found in abandoned corrals in SE Washington.

Both sunflower and Cocklebur share a colorful weevil *Rhodobaenus tridecimpunctatus* Montgomery.

This species is more common on sunflower. These big weevils are 20 mm in length and have very long proboscis for making their feeding and oviposition bites. Both genders are similar and probably take a protein meal prior to egg deposition.

Rhodobaenus quinquepunctatus feeds on both *Helianthus* and *Xanthium*, but is more common on Cocklebur in the same ecosystem of the High Plains of the Columbia Plateau. Seedpods will be full, of the larvae.

A visit to a website (Google) for these weevils reveals species and interlocking hosts. What a joyful DNA study for a graduate student to pursue!