

Banded Cucumber Beetle

Diabrotica balteata

Crops affected: Cucumber, Tomato

What is it?

Banded cucumber beetle causes damage to crops by adults defoliating plants and larvae feeding on seedling roots. It has a wide host range including cucurbits (**cucumber**, melons, pumpkin), beans, brassicas, kumara, wheat and maize, and **tomato**.

What does it look like?

Adults are 5 – 6 mm with a red head. They have yellow bands running across the back with a thin green band running lengthwise down the centre (Fig 1 & 2). Larval colour is variable; initially white but may become pale-yellow depending on the food source. Larvae size varies between 2 – 9 mm (Fig 3).

What should I look for?

Larvae will hatch from small groups of eggs laid just under the surface of the soil. Once hatched they cause damage to roots and tubers. Plants with damaged roots will lose vigour, have poor growth and may have poor fruit set.

How does it spread?

Because larvae burrow into and feed on roots and tubers, the most likely method of spread is larvae remaining with tubers during shipment. Adults can fly short distances and are unlikely to remain with host plant material during processing and transport. Their ability to fly enable dispersal into nearby crops, while eggs may spread through the movement of soil.

Why is it important?

Banded cucumber beetles are considered a serious pest because they feed on all plant parts. Adults can be particularly damaging to cucurbit seedlings by consuming the entire cotyledon. Cucurbit fruit can be destroyed either by damage caused directly by adults feeding or through the introduction of secondary rots. Larvae eat roots (and tubers) exclusively, reducing plant vigour, growth rate and fruit set. Banded cucumber beetle is also known to transmit viruses.

Where is it present?

Banded cucumber beetles are present in North, Central and South America.

How can I protect my industry?

Check your production site frequently for the presence of new pests and unusual symptoms. Make sure you are familiar with common pests of your industry so you can recognise something different.



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Fig 1. Adult Banded cucumber beetle.
Photo credit: Clemson University – USDA Cooperative Extensive Slide Series, Bugwood.org



Fig 2. Adult banded cucumber beetle, and leaf-feeding damage caused by the adult. Photo credit: Lyle Buss, UF/IFAS



Fig 3. Larva of banded cucumber beetle. Photo credit: Lyle Buss, UF/IFAS



Fig 4. Banded cucumber beetle on a flower. Photo credit: Alton N. Sparks, Jr., University of Georgia, Bugwood.org