



Asparagus Beetle

Asparagus Beetle (AB)

There are two beetles that commonly attack asparagus plants. The common asparagus beetle (the closest image →) and the spotted asparagus beetle (the farthest image →). Both adults are 1/4 inches long with oval shaped bodies, the larvae are slug-like with a visible head and legs (note closest image ↘).

The adult AB overwinter in areas near the asparagus bed, they emerge as the asparagus breaks ground in the spring. The beetles lay eggs in rows (see farthest image ↘) on new ferns and adjacent plants. Eggs hatch within a week and larvae move up the ferns and start feeding for nearly two weeks. Then the larvae fall to the ground and 7 to 10 days later the new adults emerge to start all over.

Damage from feeding includes browning and scarring on the spears, also a tell-tell sign would be a bending over of the spears in a shepherd's crook.

Control

When the asparagus ferns start to emerge, scout for adults. The best time of the day to scout is in the afternoon, this is when they are active.

The label on the *Hi-Yield Garden, Pet & Livestock Dust* and the *Hi-Yield Lawn, Garden, Pet and Livestock Spray* is the most thorough. It covers pre- and post-harvest applications, it also addresses adult and larvae stages. Applications may be made up to 3 days from harvest.

Hand picking is the most organic solution to Asparagus Beetles, but this is only effective on small beds of asparagus and requires extensive scouting and monitoring to keep the population to a level that is not reducing harvest or the vigor of the plants.

Natural Guard Neem is an organic product that is effective on beetles, it will work on the eggs, larvae and adults. The weakness of the Neem is, repeat applications may be required every 7 to 10 days. For a more effective Neem product, *ferti-lome Triple Action* has Neem/Py and with the addition of Pyrethrins, it works much better.

Natural Guard Spinosad can be used post-harvest to protect against beetles.

Due to the slickness of asparagus ferns, the addition of *Spreader Sticker* is a must!



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