

The hakea fruit weevil *Erytenna consputa* is native to Australia and is found on both silky hakea (*Hakea sericea*) and rock hakea (*Hakea gibbosa*) in South Africa, where it has been released as a biological control agent on infestations of these plants.

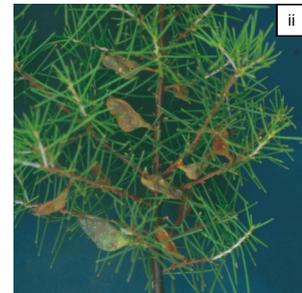
#### DESCRIPTION

The weevils are mottled grey, red-brown with black, 4-5 mm long, and with a prominent snout (i). The larvae are usually found inside the green fruits and look like small, white grubs. The adults tend to shelter in the dry, brown fruits (husks) that remain after the larvae have hollowed out the developing fruits.



#### LIFE CYCLE

Between July and November, the adults lay their eggs in an excavation in the tips and buds of leaves near young fruit or, sometimes, in the apical horns of the fruit. A female may lay up to 100 eggs during a breeding season. The larvae hatch after about two weeks, then tunnel into the growing, young fruit. Only a single larvae can develop in each fruit, and it may have to move between two to three fruits before it completes its development. In October, when the larva is fully grown, it tunnels out through one side of the fruit and pupates in the soil. The adults emerge from the soil between October and January.



#### FEEDING DAMAGE

A fruit containing a weevil has a reddish colour at first, but begins to yellow as it withers and dies (ii). Fruits attacked by weevils have a small entrance and exit hole (iii) with frass (faeces) surrounding the eaten seed. Weevils are usually present in an infestation if there are black, dried, partially split remains of young fruits on the tree.



#### IMPACT ON SILKY AND ROCK HAKEA

The larvae destroy the green developing fruits of *Hakea sericea*. At some infestations, the weevils have destroyed more than 86% of the seeds. Weevils can be found on the plants throughout the year, but they are most active and are easiest to collect between May and July. To collect the weevils for redistribution to other infestations, hold a groundsheet under the hakea branches and beat the branch with a stick (iv). The weevils, feigning death, will drop onto the sheet and can be collected. Preferably, weevils should be collected between February and August. Once collected, they should be kept cool, and must be released within two days.

