

THE FROND FEEDING WEEVIL

(*Stenopelmus rufinasus*)

A natural enemy of **RED WATER FERN** (*Azolla filiculoides*) in South Africa

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DESCRIPTION

Adult weevils are small (about 1.7mm long) and are grey-black with scattered red, black and white scales.

LIFE CYCLE

Adults are fairly long-lived, (55-60 days) with each female producing an average of 324 viable offspring. Yellow-orange eggs are deposited singly into holes chewed into the tip of the fronds. Eggs hatch after about 5 days and the young (larvae) mature during the next 7 days. The larvae pupate in black cocoons buried in the plant. Adults hatch 5 days later. The total life cycle (egg to adult) takes about 20 days.

FEEDING DAMAGE

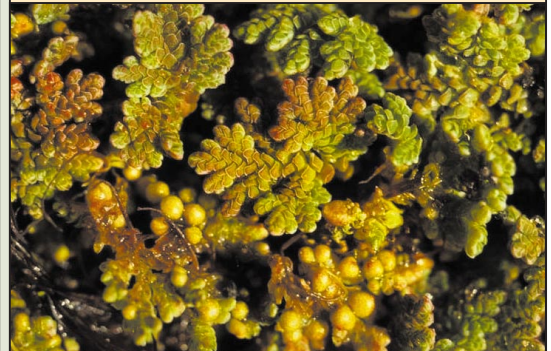
Young larvae feed on the fronds of red water fern. Older larvae burrow into the root stock, destroying it. Larvae are able to eat several plants per day. Attacked plants will rot and sink.

IMPACT ON RED WATER FERN

As the population of weevils increases on a weed mat, damage becomes evident. The mat will break up and most of the plants will then sink and rot. Severely infested sites are usually cleared in less than one year.



Adult frond feeding weevils



The red water fern



Waterway infested with red water fern



The same waterway after the introduction of the weevils



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ADDITIONAL INFORMATION IS AVAILABLE. PHONE: Weedbuster Toll-free Helpline: 0800 005 376
WEBSITE: PPRI website is located via links from the Agricultural Research Council website: www.arc.agric.za

