

Information about visible insect damage to some crops in the Garden, June 2, 2018:



Holes in the leaves of a small bok choy plant. If there had been a hail storm, the damage might have looked similar.

Floyd Wright, Estes Park gardener and 2016 Community Garden Manager: I stopped by the garden to take a look. Definitely flea beetles. They are tiny but visible, maybe 1/16" long. They are an early season insect. I would guess they'll be gone within a couple weeks, when warmer weather arrives. They can be sprayed with an insecticidal soap, but the plants will grow on without it. Flea beetles set back young plants and a heavy infestation could kill some seedlings, but won't harm more established plants much. Among their favorite plants are anything in the mustard family, like bok choy, broccoli and cabbage, but will also eat at beets and lettuce.

Alison O'Connor, CSU Extension in Larimer County: To me, it looks like flea beetles....or possibly earwigs. Trap for earwigs by either putting out shallow dishes of oil or rolling up damp newspaper and leaving it in the garden overnight. If it's flea beetles, they are shiny black, small and jump well. Control: Use floating row covers or plant a trap crop, like radishes. You can also use spinosad* or diatomaceous earth. Yellow sticky traps can also help with populations. Remove all weeds in the garden and nearby. Control really is only necessary when 30%+ of the crop is damaged.

Links to further information:

Colorado State University Extension Bulletin 5.592, Flea Beetles:
<http://extension.colostate.edu/topic-areas/insects/flea-beetles-5-592/>

Old Farmer's Almanac, "How to Identify and Get Rid of Flea Beetles":
<https://www.almanac.com/pest/flea-beetles>

*information about Spinosad:
<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Spinosad>

Estes Valley Community Garden

www.evcg.org evcg@evcg.org

