Red-headed Leafy Spurge Stem Boring Beetle
(*Oberea erythrocephala*)

LEAFY SPURGE BIOLOGICAL CONTROL

IMPROVING BIOCONTROL SUCCESS

STORING

- Collect beetles in breathable containers, place in a cooler on top of ice packs
- Place a towel/newspaper between ice packs and beetle containers to prevent freezing the insects
- Insects can be kept in the refrigerator at a moderate temperature, in breathable containers for **up to 3 days**

MONITORING

- In the early-spring, dig up and dissect roots looking for larvae
- Sweep net or visually inspecting plants mid-spring to mid-summer for adults
- Take photos and mark release locations
- Monitoring forms are available through the MT Biocontrol Project at mtbiocontrol.org

RELEASING

- Release 50+ stem borers in the summer per site, scatter the insects close together
- A minimum of a 5 acre infestation is ideal
- Best used in combination with other leafy spurge biocontrol agents

COLLECTING

- Sweep net stands of leafy spurge where beetles are abundant
- Hand pick the stem borers out of the net or insect separator
- During collection:
  - 50-100 insects per container
  - **Add spurge foliage to containers (no flowers or seeds)**
  - Cover any openings that they could escape from
  - **Immediately store** as described in the storage section
- **It is important to not transfer other weed seeds from the collection site to the release site**

BACKGROUND

BIOLOGY

- One generation per year
- Adults emerge early-summer
- Females deposit a single egg per stem on the lower part of the stem (up to 40)
- Larvae mine their way down the stem into the root crown and nearby lateral roots
- Larvae overwinter in the root crown
- Larvae pupate into adults in the root crown in the spring

IMPACT

- Larval mining kills shoots and reduces root reserves
- Insect activity thins out infestations making them more desirable for flea beetles

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