

	Garden Q & A
	Stephen H. Brown

Topic: Sri Lanka Weevils and Black Sapote

Question: Attached are pixs of my black sapote trees. There seems to be something eating the leaves. All of the leaves on each of the trees are chewed up. I can't find any bugs on the trees. However, I have noticed little white beetle-type bugs outside of the house. They are about 1/4 to 1/2 inch long. I have an avocado tree that has the same chewed leaves. Can you tell me what is causing this and how I can eliminate it?

- Judy, Northwest Cape Coral

Answer: This problem insect is often not seen but the damage it causes cannot be missed. Sri Lanka weevil, *Myloccerus undatus*, also feeds on citrus, hibiscus, Indian hawthorn and a host of other ornamental plants. By shaking the affected plant, some of the insects might fall from their feeding spots thereby exposing them for viewing. In fact, the beetle-like bugs outside the house are probably Sri Lanka weevils. As is normally the case, the most difficult weeds, insects, and diseases to control are usually those that have recently arrived in Florida with no natural enemies in their new environments. The weevil was first identified in Broward County in 2000. From trees, you can reduce their numbers by holding an inverted opened umbrella under a branch and shaking it vigorously to knock the weevils into the umbrella. The weevils can then be dumped into a bucket of soapy water. Varying degrees of control can be achieved by using carbaryl (Sevin), acephate or another insecticide labeled for leaf-chewing insects or beetles. Control may only be temporary as other populations of the insects are on the move in search of food. Sri Lanka weevil has not been known to kill the host upon which it feeds.



Sri Lanka weevil



Black sapote leaves damaged by Sri Lanka weevils

Useful Links

[Black Sapote Fact Sheet](#) <http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/hs305> [Stephen's Webpage](#)

Stephen Brown is a horticulture agent with the Lee County Extension Service. Submit questions by calling the horticulture desk at 533-7504 between 9 a.m. and 4:00 p.m. or by sending an email to brownsh@leegov.com.