

Seed weevils

EXOTIC PEST – CALL THE EXOTIC PLANT PEST HOTLINE IF SUSPECTED

What are seed weevils?

Seed weevils are serious pests of avocado. The larvae feed on the stones within the fruit, which damages the fruit and can lead to premature fruit drop. This results in significant economic damage in avocado orchards.

What does it look like?

- Adult *Conotrachelus aguacatae* and *C. perseae* are similar in appearance. Small weevils up to 6 mm long with a reddish-brown colouration.
- Adult *Heilipus lauri* are much larger reaching up to 16 mm long, with reddish, brown, grey, or black coloration and a long beak.
- Seed weevils are challenging to detect as the larvae feed inside the fruit.
- Infested fruit may have small holes with a white powdery substance present.

What damage does it do?

- Adult seed weevils can cause damage to foliage, fruits and flowers however, the primary economic damage is caused by larvae feeding on the seeds within fruit.
- In heavily affected orchards, losses of up to 85% may occur without control measures.
- Even with intensive management, 3% losses are reported in regions where the pests are established.
- These pests could significantly disrupt both domestic and international avocado trade if introduced into Australia.

What can it be confused with?

Weevils are an highly diverse group of beetles with thousands of described species present in Australia. Though weevils vary greatly in appearance, exotic seed weevils could be confused for several native species. Accurate identification of these exotic seed weevils requires specialist knowledge.



Heilipus lauri female, lateral view

Castaneda-Voldozola et al 2013



Conotrachelus perseae female lateral view

Fuentes et al 2017



Criollo avocado infested by *Conotrachelus perseae*

biocontrol.ucr.edu



Where is it now?

Seed weevils are serious pests in Central America, particularly in Mexico and Colombia. They are currently restricted to Central America and neighbouring countries.

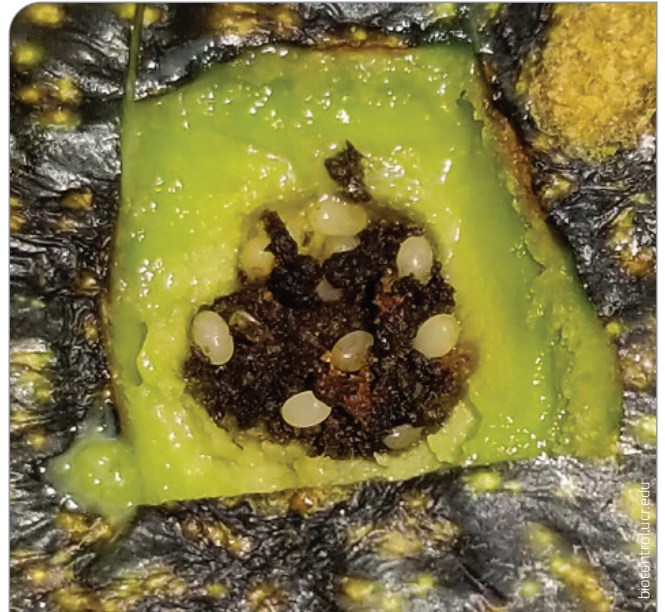
What are the risk materials and pathways it can move around on?

- Primary risk pathway is through packaging and transport of avocado fruit infested with adult beetles.
- Larvae can be moved in fruit infested late in the season though most fruit infested with larvae is likely to drop before harvesting.
- Planting material such as plants or seeds containing larvae/pupae or soil and leaf litter containing pupae.
- Adults can be carried on shared equipment, vehicles or clothing.
- Adults can disperse short distances by flying.

On-farm biosecurity practices

Developing an on-farm biosecurity plan and making sure staff follow good biosecurity practices are functional ways to reduce the risk of pests and diseases entering your orchard. Suggested practices for seed weevils include:

- Monitor regularly and maintain comprehensive records of pest and disease monitoring.
- Use planting material from accredited nurseries.
- Have a visitor and staff register.
- Wash footwear and vehicles to reduce the risk of spread and avoid sharing equipment.
- Dispose of pruning and other plant waste material appropriately. Remove damaged and dropped fruit.
- Use farm zoning to control the movement of soil and mulch.



Damages in fruits by *Helipus lauri*, big seed borer avocado.

If you see anything unusual, call the
Exotic Plant Pest Hotline on 1800 084 881.

**EXOTIC PLANT
PEST HOTLINE
1800 084 881**

Use trees from ANVAS accredited nurseries



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