



Wallsend Nurseries

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Soldier beetles

These beetles are really not treated as pests in the garden at all, but rather, as a natural pest control in themselves.

They feed on soft-bodied insects and will often be seen gathering in huge numbers on flowering trees and shrubs waiting to attack nectar feeding insects that are attracted to the flowers.

Problems may occur when large swarms weigh down and sometimes break thin branches or twigs. On rare occasions they have been known to damage ripe cherries or newly set fruit.

They can interfere with pollination as they may attack bees and other pollinating insects that visit the flowers.

The beetles may be found on surfaces of lawns and even on walls of buildings but are really doing no harm there at all.

Soldier beetles are about 12-13mm long, with dull blue-green or almost black wing covers and a yellow band near the black head. The yellow end of the abdomen can also be seen from above.

Underneath the beetles are yellow to orange-yellow.

Plants affected include almost any that are in flower since it is the flowers that attract the insects the beetles feed on.

Control is usually unnecessary. If spraying must be carried out, spray late in the day when bees have returned to their hives as the chemical is dangerous to bees as well. Maldison® (Malathon®, Malathion®, etc) at the rate of 1ml per litre of water will kill the beetles. Apply the chemical to the swarm rather than to the surrounding flowers if possible.

Most cases reported to us disappear fairly soon of their own accord. (Approximately 2-4 weeks...often far less) Usually this is when the plants have completed flowering and are therefore not attracting as many insects for the beetles to prey upon.