

Biological Control of Mimosa

MALACORHINUS

Root Feeding Beetle

January 2018

Malacorhinus irregularis is the scientific name of the beetle commonly called malacorhinus. It is native to Mexico and was introduced into the Northern Territory in 2000 after a year of testing in quarantine.

Adults are shiny, red beetles, about 7mm long, with black marks on their wings. They can be hard to find, except when mimosa is inundated by flood water and beetles are forced onto the leaves.

Adult malacorhinus beetles feed on the young leaves of mimosa seedlings. Larvae also feed on the seeds, nodules, roots and the leaves of mimosa seedlings, decreasing its ability to grow and reproduce. Malacorhinus has become well established across the Top End and is successfully contributing to mimosa control long term. It is sometimes present in large numbers and can cause significant damage to mimosa infestations.



Malacorhinus Adult

Adult female malacorhinus beetles lay many tiny yellow eggs on the leaves of the mimosa plant, which hatch within seven days. The grubs feed on mimosa seeds, roots and seedling leaves as they grow, and then pupate for about six or seven days before emerging as adult beetles. The whole lifecycle takes about 30 days from egg to breeding adult beetle.



Mimosa impacted by Malacorhinus



Malacorhinus larvae feeding trials



Eggs



Larvae



Pupae

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