

Eucalyptus Weevil

- Other names:** *Eucalyptus* snout beetle, *Eucalyptus* weevil, gum-tree weevil
Scientific name: *Gonipterus scutellatus* (complex), *Gonipterus* spp.
Order: Coleoptera
Family: Curculionidae

Gonipterus scutellatus has been collected throughout southern Australia and a number of sub-species exist. It is widespread and common throughout south-western Australia, and is a major pest. In eastern Australia *G. scutellatus* is equally widespread but less damaging.

Larval feeding is most damaging. It is characterised by mine trails on the leaf surface, although later instars also feed on the leaf edge. The new season's growing tip can be completely defoliated by the larvae, leaving only bare leafless stems. These stems often die-back resulting in lost tree height and potential form problems. Larvae can feed on both juvenile and adult foliage but are more commonly found on adult foliage.

Adult feeding damage can occur up to 8 months of the year. It is characterised by scalloping to the leaf edge, and is indistinguishable from adult chrysomelid beetle damage. Weevil adults prefer adult foliage to juvenile foliage, feeding preferentially on growing shoots and leaves. Plantations less than two years old are rarely affected.

Eggs are ca. 1 mm long, yellow and an elongate oval shape and are laid down in brown egg cases made from excrement. The egg cases can be found glued to new growing shoots and leaves. All larval stages are slug like, legless, and yellow-green with dark lateral stripes and a covering of sticky slime. Often larvae carry a long filamentous strand of excrement, which can become stuck to their body. However, they differ from larvae of the related genus *Oxyops*, which are completely covered in green or brown coloured excrement. Each larval instar is larger than the preceding stage, with the final instar measuring approximately 10-12 mm in length. Adult beetles are 10-12 mm long, with females being larger than males. Adults are variable in appearance, but are commonly a rusty red when they first emerge, slowly changing to a dark brown buff coloration with age. Commonly, they have a white spot on their back.

In south-western Australia one generation per year occurs in contrast to the two or more generations reported elsewhere. Adults are present throughout the year but are relatively inactive from March to July. They become sexually mature during July and August, with egg-laying occurring until January. Groups of 1-14 eggs are laid down, with eggs hatching in about two weeks. Larvae undergo four instars or moults and take 1-2 months to complete development. They then drop to the ground and burrow down to several centimetres to pupate. Pupation lasts approximately one month and occurs from November to March.

Weevils



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From left to right: Typical weevil damage seen on tops of trees, damage by *Heteronyx* spp and *Perga* spp. may also look like this; Close up of damage trails on leaf left by weevil larvae.



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Gonipterus scutellatus

Clockwise from upper left: Adults mating, note the smaller size of the male; egg casing with top removed to reveal yellow cylindrical eggs, early larva with trailing excrement; older larva with dark lateral lines; newly emerged adult weevil, not rusty red colour; older adult colour faded to dark brown to grey.