

## Sweetpotato Weevil (*Cylas formicarius*)

**Other common name:** Sweetpotato root borer

**Distribution:** Widely distributed around the world in tropical and subtropical regions. In the U.S.: Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Hawaii, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, Oklahoma, South Carolina, Tennessee, and Texas. In California: an isolated population of *C. formicarius* exists in San Diego County.

**Hosts and damage:** One of the most destructive pests of sweet potato (*Ipomoea batatas*). Also feeds on over 30 other plants (mostly from genera *Ipomoea* and *Convolvulus*). Larvae tunnel in the sweet potato tubers, leave cavities filled with fecal material, and often introduce pathogens that cause decay. Larval mining in the stems may cause wilting and dieback and can stunt the growth of the plant. Adults mostly feed on exposed parts of the plants and may reach tubers through soil cracks.

**Field ID: Adults** (about 5.5-8.0 mm) have conspicuous coloration: metallic dark blue head and elytra and orange-red thorax and legs. Adults are able to fly, but rarely do so. Often “play dead” when captured.

**Larvae** (full grown) about 10 mm long and legless. Body white to cream color with light brown head. Pass through 3 instars.

**Pupae** about 5.5-6.5 mm in length. Initially white colored they turn grayish-yellow with darker wing pads, legs and eyes.

**Eggs** have white color and are laid in shallow holes that females make in various plant parts.

