

## Garden Fleahoppers

### Introduction

Garden fleahoppers (*Halticus bractatus*) are a native insect and one of the smallest plant bugs.

### Identification

Garden fleahoppers are small (1/10 inch, shiny black insects with long legs and antennae. They have an expanded hind leg segment (femora) enabling them to jump or hop when disturbed. Garden fleahoppers resemble flea beetles except that their antennae are as long as their body, whereas flea beetles have much shorter antennae that are less than half the length of their body. The immature garden fleahopper nymphs are pale green turning darker as they age, resembling small aphids.



Figures 1 & 2: Garden fleahopper adult (left) and nymph (right). Photo by L. Pundt

### Feeding Damage

The garden fleahopper has a broad host range feeding upon many different herbaceous annuals and perennials, legumes, garden vegetables and weeds. Some ornamentals reported as hosts include chrysanthemum, helenium, helianthus, phlox, rudbeckia, scabiosa, salvia, verbena and zinnia. As this sucking insect feeds, you will see pale or whitish spots or speckles on the leaves that resembles two-spotted spider mite or lacebug injury.



Figure 3 & 4: Garden fleahopper feeding damage. Photos by L. Pundt

### **Biology and Life Cycle**

Garden fleahoppers overwinter as eggs inserted into plant stems. Eggs hatch into nymphs that then develop into adults. There may be 3 to 4 generations per year.

### **Management**

Garden fleahoppers may buildup in nearby weeds, so practicing good weed control is important. It is easily suppressed by applications of labeled insecticides.

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### **References**

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