

THE MAURITIUS THORN SEED-WEEVIL

(*Sulcobruchus subsuturalis*)

A natural enemy of MAURITIUS
THORN (*Caesalpinia decapetala*)
in South Africa

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DESCRIPTION

The adult is a small (about 4mm long), black beetle with fine, grey hairs. They are active during the day and fly readily.

LIFE CYCLE

Adults live up to 65 days and lay between 73 and 111 eggs. The eggs are deposited one at a time onto the seed coat but are hard to see until they have hatched (about 8 days after being laid). The young (larvae) develop over about 35 days and do not move between seeds. The larvae will pupate (develop into a weevil) within the seed. Usually five or six weevils can develop in a single seed.

FEEDING DAMAGE

The larvae burrow into the seed, destroying it so preventing its germination. White flecks (the egg shells) on the seed coat indicate the presence of the larvae in a seed. The adults produce a round emergence hole when they burrow out of the seed to lay their eggs on new seeds.

EFFECT ON MAURITIUS THORN

The weevils will not eat or kill existing trees. As they attack the mature seeds that have already fallen from the pods it is expected that the weevils will decrease the number of seeds available for the regeneration of Mauritius thorn after clearing.



The Mauritius thorn seed-weevil on a Mauritius thorn seed



Seed with egg shells and adult emergence hole



Mauritius thorn in flower



Mauritius thorn seed pods containing seeds



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ADDITIONAL INFORMATION IS AVAILABLE. PHONE: Weedbuster Toll-free Helpline: 0800 005 376
WEBSITE: PPRI website is located via links from the Agricultural Research Council website: www.arc.agric.za

