

Lifecycle and Damage:

Larva: Larvae hatch in about 5 days and feed for about 3 weeks, passing through 4 growth stages (instars). The head and legs are brownish-black; the body is yellowish. Larvae are usually covered with a secretion of mucus and fecal material, giving them a shiny black, wet appearance (Fig. 1). When the larva completes its growth, it drops to the ground and pupates in the soil.

Pupa: Pupal colour varies from a bright yellow when it is first formed, to the colour of the adult just before emergence. The pupal stage lasts 2 - 3 weeks. Adult beetles emerge and feed for a couple of weeks before seeking overwintering sites. There is one generation per year.

Adult: Adult cereal leaf beetles (CLB) have shiny bluish-black wing-covers (Fig. 2). The thorax and legs are light orange-brown. Females (4.9 to 5.5 mm) are slightly larger than males (4.4 to 5 mm). They emerge in the spring once temperatures reach 10-15 °C and the adults are active for about 6 weeks. They usually begin feeding on grasses, then move into winter cereals and later into spring cereals. Adult beetles overwinter in and along the margins of grain fields in protected places such as in straw stubble, under crop and leaf litter, and in the crevices of tree bark. They favour sites adjacent to shelter belts, deciduous and conifer forests.



Figure 1. Larval stage of *Oulema melanopus* with characteristic feeding damage visible on leaf (Photo: M. Dolinski).



Figure 2. Adult *Oulema melanopus* measure 4.4-5.5 mm long (Photo: M. Dolinski).