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# IPMINFO

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## Integrated Pest Management for the Home Environment

### TITLE

### WESTERN TWELVE-SPOTTED CUCUMBER BEETLE

Symptoms/Damage:	Holes or eaten areas primarily on the leaves and flowers.
When it is a problem:	Throughout the warmer months, especially June through October.
Hosts:	Squash, corn, berries, peas, roses, and numerous other plants.
IPM Techniques:	Trap crops.

**Introduction.** The western twelve-spotted cucumber beetle (*Diabrotica undecimpunctata*) is an especially common garden pest throughout California, and definitely one of the most often noticed.

**Life Cycle and Description.** The adult beetle is about 1 /4 inch (6-7 mm) long, greenish yellow in color and has 12 black spots on the body and a black head. Adults overwinter in protected areas and become active in the early spring, from January through March. Females lay their eggs just below the soil surface. The eggs hatch to 7-10 days, and worm-like larvae feed on the roots of numerous plants, including corn, alfalfa, and wild grasses. The full-grown larva is 1 /2 inch long (12 mm) and yellowish in color. They form pupae in the soil from which the adults emerge. Adult beetles cause the most noticeable damage by feeding on numerous flowers such as aster, dahlia, rose and zinnia, and many vegetables including beans, cucumber, melons, squash, eggplant and tomato. During some years, countless numbers of adult beetles appear to cultivated areas soon after the native grasses and weeds dry up in the foothills and meadows.

**IPM Techniques.** In general, pesticides are used to control the adult beetles. Check with your County Agricultural Commissioner or UC Cooperative Extension office for current recommendations. Certain plants such as alfalfa are highly attractive to the adult beetles and can be used as trap crops. These can be planted at the edge of a garden to draw the beetles out and to deter their movement into your vegetables and flowers.

#### References

Insects of Western North America, E. O. Essig. 1926.

The Common Insects of North America, L. A. Swan and C. S. Papp. 1972.