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## **Elm Flea Weevil to Attack Elm Trees**

Elm flea weevils have been feasting on elm trees in North Texas. They are very small beetles about 1.6 mm long, which looks like a black speck to the naked eye. However, under magnification one will see the prominent curving mouthpart which is distinctive of the weevil family. They also have a large hindleg that is similar to fleas, hence the common name of this beetle. Also if populations are large, then some beetles may fall onto the lawn or sidewalk or even onto the homeowner when they are under the tree.

The potential to defoliate elms can be a possibility, since these beetles leave tiny holes in the leaf as they feed. However the defoliation will not kill the tree directly, but the tree may weaken or become stressed. This could lead to other insects or pathogens to attack the stressed tree.

The good thing is these weevils will only feed on elm trees so there is no need to treat surrounding trees. Also their damage will not harm healthy trees, but stressed trees will be affected by these beetles. Since they feed on the leaves, they can be controlled with foliar sprays such as those containing acephate or permethrin. If the trees are large, then pest control professional may need to be contacted.



Adult Elm Flea Weevil. Photo by: Mike Merchant, Professor and Extension Entomologist, Texas A&M University.