

NEWS RELEASE  
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## RAIN BEETLES

### BACKYARD HORTICULTURE

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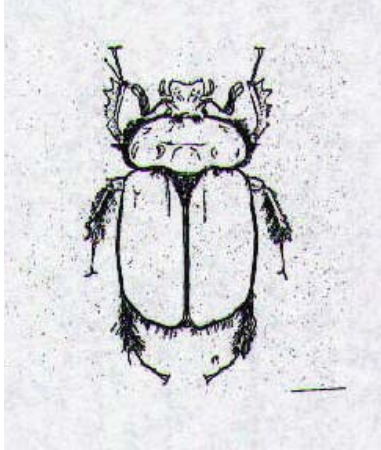
With the first fall rains to Mariposa County, have come the annual flight of some large beetles. Sometimes called rain beetles, the males fly and seek mates during this time. Since they often thud against your window at night, they can easily attract your attention. They usually emerge at dusk in a fine drizzling rain with the males being attracted to a lemony odor emitted by females, so strong even people can smell it.

These insects are over an inch long, dark shiny brown with fuzzy undersides. These adult beetles do not feed, but the larval stage can be damaging to plants. The  $\frac{3}{4}$  inch long “c-shaped” light colored larvae can feed upon roots of forest and orchard trees, as well as grasses. This immature stage can burrow up to 8 feet into the ground in search of roots. Instead of using their legs to dig, these beetles actually use their mandibles to move through the soil. On a good day, a healthy larva can make a burrow up to 3 inches long. The entire life cycle from egg to larvae, pupae and adult, can take up to 12 years to complete.

Rain beetles (genus *Pleocomma* – “many hairs”) are in the scarab family that includes june beetles, rose chafers and hoplia beetles.

Since the damaging phase of this insect is in the larval stage, no chemical controls are very effective or recommended. As for the adults, there is also probably no effective

way to control them during their fall flights. Because the adults are at most a nuisance, no pesticides are recommended.



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