

HRSS FACT SHEET

Eucalyptus variegated beetle (*Paropsisterna variicollis*)

Paropsisterna variicollis is an introduced pest leaf beetle of the family Chrysomelidae (Insecta: Coleoptera). Even though it is not known to be a major pest in commercial *Eucalyptus* plantations in its native Australia, the beetles can cause significant damage to several *Eucalyptus* species. It was first detected in New Zealand at Te Pohue in Hawke's Bay in March 2016.



In New Zealand, the host plants so far appear to be *Eucalyptus viminalis*, *E. globulus*, *E. obliqua*, *E. regnans* while in Australia, the beetles have also been recorded from *E. ovata*, *E. aggregata*, *E. macarthurii*, *E. bridgesiana*, *E. mannifera*, *E. melliodora*, *E. pauciflora* and *E. nitens*. *Paropsisterna variicollis* often attack eucalypt plants that are less than 4 years old unlike another leaf beetle, *Paropsis charybdis*.

Description

Adults are about 8-10 mm long, obovate shaped and colour varies from pale brownish yellow to orange brown. The underside is black / dark coloured with pale patches at the bases of femur and tibia. The beetles may fade in colour after death. Pale yellow coloured egg are laid in batches on young foliage. Larvae often feed in groups and fully grown larvae can be distinguished from other eucalypt pest species by yellow colouration and a conspicuous dark line on top (dorsal side). Other characteristic larval characters include dark head capsule & legs and dark pigmentation underside (ventral side) of last few segments.

Adult *P. variicollis* (note dark underside)



Eggs of *P. variicollis*



Late instar larvae of *P. variicollis*



Other similar looking eucalypt pests:

Paropsisterna beata



Note dark transverse bands on 2nd instar larva indicated by green arrows in the image on the right above and these bands disappear in later instars. Eggs are dark brown coloured.

Paropsis charybdis



These beetles usually attack eucalypt trees that are older than 4 years. 2nd and 3rd instar larvae are greenish-yellow coloured with dark lateral stripes. 4th instar larvae can be separated from those of *Paropsisterna variicollis* by lack of dark line on the top.

Trachymela sloanei



Adults are about 6-7 mm long, brown coloured with dark mottled spots and larvae are brownish in appearance with black head.

Trachymela catenata



Adults are about 6-7 mm long with dark spots on elytra.

Gonipterus platensis (gum tree weevil)



Gum tree weevil larvae also exhibit a darker line on top but these larvae can be separated from those of *P. variicollis* by presence of long thread like faeces trail.