

Who's poking holes in my plants?

Spring is an exciting time for gardeners... and for bugs. While there are a number of insects that are early to take advantage of our first seedlings, including the many species of aphids that are migrating from overwintering hosts in search of their favorite vegetables and weeds, one of the more conspicuous early garden visitors is the **flea beetle**.



Flea beetles are tiny (1/10 inch) shiny beetles with enlarged hind legs used for quick getaways. They come in various colors and feed on various vegetables and weeds, leaving a characteristic pin-hole damage anywhere they feed. Flea beetles especially love **radishes** and **arugula**, but can be found eating a wide variety of vegetable leaves.

Check the articles at the Quann Community Garden website:

(<http://www.quanngardens.org/articles/row-cover>) for information on how to manage flea beetles, whether with row covers or chemicals. These resources are especially recommended if you're interested in keeping a pristine garden or if you have flea beetles up to your eyeballs.

If you're okay with having some chew holes in your leafy greens, however, flea beetles don't usually do enough damage to kill a plant, and you will probably get along just fine without managing them.

-Mike Crossley, plot C5