



# Forest Threats

*Melanterius seed weevil/ Melanterius inconspicuus*

Tree Protection Co-operative Programme

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## Insect pests

### Melanterius seed weevil/ *Melanterius inconspicuus*

*Melanterius inconspicuus* Lea, 1899

#### SYMPTOMS

Small holes indicative of oviposition are present on young shoots of black wattle trees. Swelling of the shoots starts around the oviposition hole due to the growing larva and its feeding. Feeding within the shoots leads to cracking, yellowing, and dieback. Much larger holes can also occur around the time of emergence of the mature larva when it is ready to pupate in the soil.

Thus far, aside from minor damage, no detrimental effects have been observed to plantation health due to infestation by the weevil. We are continuing to monitor its presence and determine if it will have any detrimental effects in the long term.

#### BIOLOGY

*Melanterius* weevils are seed feeders that lay their eggs and develop in wattle seed. However, *M. inconspicuus* forms part of a unique groups of these insects that have also been found to infest wattle vegetative tissues in the presence of *Uromycladium* infection (Pinzón-Navarro et al. 2017). In the case of *M. inconspicuus* in South Africa, it infests and develops within shoots and twigs in the absence of *Uromycladium* infection. Immature adult weevils have been observed to congregate around wounds induced by hail damage.

