

THE PEPPER WEEVIL

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HISTORY

The pepper weevil is apparently of Mexican origin and was first described in 1894 by Cano from Guanajuato, Mexico. It was first reported in the United States by Walker (3)¹ in 1904, when it was found in pepper collected at Boerne, Texas. In 1923 the weevil was reported for the first time from southern California. There, as in Florida, the growers stated that similar damage had been noticed in previous years but it had not been severe enough to be investigated.

In some years the damage has been very great in certain sections. Pratt (2) states: "At San Antonio, Texas, many truckers had given up growing of peppers on account of their experience the year previous, and on one patch at Collins Gardens fully 80 percent of the pods were attacked."

Elmore *et al.* (1) state: "In 1909 M. M. High reported the loss of an entire crop in the lower Rio Grande Valley in Texas from the ravages of this insect, but he failed to find the weevil again until 1913, when he observed a few specimens." They also state that it has caused 50 percent loss to California growers during some years; that in Texas heavy losses have been experienced every few years since 1904; and in southern New Mexico there have been serious losses periodically for several years.

APPEARANCE AND HISTORY OF WEEVIL IN FLORIDA

During the month of April, 1935, an insect attacking peppers was sent to the Experiment Station for identification. This insect was at once recognized as the pepper weevil, *Anthonomus eugenii*, which had never before been reported from this state. A few growers in Manatee County claimed that they had noticed similar damage during preceding years. It is quite probable that it had been present for some time, as it was spread over an area of several square miles. However, this was the first time that the damage was general and severe enough to be reported. At this time most of the fields examined in Manatee County were found

¹Italic figures in parentheses refer to "Literature Cited" in the back of this bulletin.