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WEEVILS IN PEAS AND BEANS

Start Early to Destroy Them—Three Methods Explained

THE weevils that breed in beans are confined in their choice of food to the seeds of the bean and pea family. The most of the weevils of this group continue to breed in the beans or peas throughout the year, although they are much more destructive in the warm summer months than at any other season of the year. A few weevils in a sack in the spring will produce enough weevils to completely destroy the beans or peas by fall, if they are left undisturbed. The earlier the beans or peas are treated, therefore, the better.

The two best methods of treating these seed is to store them in air-slaked lime or to kill the weevils by means of heat. The first method has the advantage that the beans or peas need no further attention. It has the disadvantage that the lime may be somewhat troublesome, especially if the seed are used for food or feed purposes. The treatment by heat has the disadvantage that the beans or peas must be watched carefully and treated again if living weevils are discovered at any time.

Method No. 1.—Storing in Lime

THE amount of lime necessary to use with the first method will vary somewhat with the number of beans or peas stored in one place. For very small amounts of beans or peas, anything less than a gallon, use four times as much air-slaked lime as you have seed, mix thoroughly and store in bags or boxes. For larger amounts up to, say, two or three bushels, use the same amount of air-slaked lime as you have beans or peas. For amounts up to, say, twenty-five bushels, use one-half as much lime. For larger amounts than this, place the beans or peas in a bin to a depth of not over two or three feet, mix well a small amount of air-slaked lime, say, one bushel to eight or ten of beans or peas, smooth off the top and cover with a layer of lime half an inch to an inch thick.

The air-slaked lime will not injure the beans or peas for food, feed, or seed purposes. When the peas are used for food or feed purposes, the lime can easily be removed by sifting and then washing thoroughly; for seed purposes the lime need not be removed, but may be sowed with the seed.

Method No. 2.—Dry Heat

THE beans or peas may be treated by either wet or dry heat. The former is to be preferred if one has only a few to treat, but the latter is much more convenient if one has large amounts to treat. In treating the beans or peas by the dry method, they may be stored in any fairly tight room or building that can be heated. If there is no stove in the building, an ordinary oil stove is a convenient method of heating. If the room is tightly closed, the temperature can easily be raised, in the summer time, from 120 to 140 degrees. The temperature should not be higher than this if the beans or peas are to be used for seed purposes. Higher temperatures will do no harm if they are to be used for food purposes only. This high temperature should be maintained for from three to four hours.

Method No. 3.—Dipping in Hot Water

FOR those who prefer, the beans or peas may be treated by dipping in hot water at about 140 degrees for fifteen to twenty minutes. Water at 140 degrees is slightly hotter than one can bear the hand in comfortably. This treatment will not injure the beans or peas, if they are thoroughly dried after treatment. The beans or peas should then be stored in tight sacks to prevent weevils gaining entrance from the outside.—Z. P. Metcalf, Division of Entomology, N. C. State College of Agriculture.

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