

Golden Tortoise Beetle

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The golden tortoise beetles (*Metritona bicolor*), also known as gold bugs, are common in western Washington. The adult is golden, roundish, and about 1/4 inch long. After the beetle dies, the gold color fades or disappears. The golden tortoise beetle can also change colors when alive from pink or lavender back to gold again. The larva (immature stage) is brownish black and possesses numerous spines on its backside to which larval excrements and old larval skins are deposited or attached. These larval coverings appear to be an adaptation for defensive camouflage. Larvae and adults feed on field bindweed (morning glory) and related plants.



Fig. 1. Adult golden tortoise beetle. By A.L. Antonelli



Fig. 2. Larva of golden tortoise beetle. By A.L. Antonelli