

## Scenario of insect pests on Ashwagandha (*Withania somnifera*) in the plains of Chhattisgarh

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*Withania somnifera*, an important medicinal plant known for its rejuvenating properties is also called as the Indian Ginseng (Ahmad, *et al.* 2005). Roots, leaves and occasionally seeds of *W. somnifera* are used in ayurvedic and unani medicines. Roots contain several alkaloids and withaniols prescribed as medication for hiccups, several female disorders, rheumatism, dropsy, lung inflammation, stomach and skin diseases. It is also an ingredient of tonics prescribed for curing disability and sexual weakness in males. Like other crops, Ashwagandha is infested by many insect pests.

The larvae of *Deilephila nerii* were found defoliating the leaves of ashwagandha. Three species of Coleopterans were found feeding on the leaves. *Henosepilachna vigintioctopunctata* (Coleoptera: Coccinellidae) was predominant at early stages of the crop. Both adults and grubs cause damage to the leaves and tender parts by scraping the epidermal layer in a very characteristic manner leaving a netted pattern. The incidence of *Epilachna* beetle resulted incomplete skeletonized leaves during heavy infestation, at later stages of crop growth. Finally, the plants dried and withered down. of green plant bug, *Nezara viridula*, a polyphagous pest, were observed to suck the sap from leaves and buds of ashwagandha. *Helicoverpa* sp. was found feeding on leaves and also boring into buds, flowers and fruits.

**Table: Insect pests recorded on Ashwagandha.**

Sl.no.	Insect species	Order:Family
01.	<i>Henosepilachna vigintioctopunctata</i>	Coleoptera: Coccinellidae
02.	<i>Deilephila nerii</i> .	Lepidoptera: Sphingidae
03.	<i>Helicoverpa</i> sp.	Lepidoptera: Noctuidae
04.	<i>Nezara viridula</i>	Hemiptera: Pentatomidae
05.	Leaf miner	Lepidoptera: Gelechiidae

## References

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*Henoepilachna vigintioctopunctata* (Adult)



*Henoepilachna vigintioctopunctata* (Grubs)



Leaf miner damaged on leaf.