INTRODUCTION
The mango weevil (Sternochetus mangiferae (F)) has developed into the most important insect pest on mangoes. The beetle is of Indian or South-East Asian origin and occurs throughout Africa, Madagascar and the Indian Ocean Islands (Annecke & Moran, 1982). The weevil is of particular interest to the exporters of mangoes, especially the later ripening varieties. The status of the insect regarding mango-rejections at the major exporting outlets from South Africa has changed from 16,19 per cent of all rejections in the 1983/84 season to 33,9 per cent (1984/85) and increased again to 44,79 per cent during the 1985/86 season (Pieterse, 1986).

DESCRIPTION
The small, cream-coloured, oval eggs are laid singly on green fruit. The female deposits the egg just under the skin of the fruit. One female may lay up to 175 eggs (De Villiers, 1984). The eggs hatch within 5-14 days. According to Dieckmann (1982), more eggs are laid on earlier varieties than on later ones. After hatching, the larvae penetrate the fruit and move towards the pip to complete their life cycle within the seed. The larvae are white, with brown heads and are without legs. The external penetration lesion of the egg-laying locality heals completely and no external visual indication of the beetle's presence can be detected. The life cycle from egg to adult, takes about 6-8 weeks.

The adults are about 6-9 mm long and brown with lighter markings on the elytra (Figure 1). The beetles are winged, but according to Kok (1979) and De Villiers (1984), they are unable to fly long distances. The beetles hide under the loose bark of stems, in the crotches of trees and under loose material under trees and are able to hibernate inside the seeds of mangoes (Kok, 1979).

OBSERVATIONS
Only a few beetles were found in the orchards throughout the season. Directly after harvesting, large numbers of beetles were found in the crotches of trees. An average of six beetles per tree were counted; the highest number per tree being 23. No alternative host plants are known and the beetles complete only one generation per year. The number of beetles were found in the orchards during the season, the numbers present did not correlate with the amount of infestation present in the fruit, leaving the question of the whereabouts of these beetles during the season unanswered. Samples of the loose material from under the trees also yielded no beetles.

The beetles could not be attracted to lights and traps (sticky and flight-interception traps) yielded poor results. No natural enemies were bred from the beetles during the season. However, much larger numbers of beetles should be screened for the presence of natural enemies before a definite answer could be given. The ideal would certainly be to obtain and implement natural enemies against the insects. Such enemies would probably have to be imported from Asia, the origin of the beetles.

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