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Time of the Weevil

When spring returns to Lombardy and warm sunshine mellows again the pink-washed walls, farmers watch their fields with an anxious eye. To bieticitori, spring is the time of the weevil, and in a few days an entire planting of sugar-beet can be devastated by a pest which attacks both above and below ground.

The sugar-beet weevil, Temnorrhinus mendicus Gyll, infests the fields in spring, the adult insects feeding on the young beet leaves: eggs are laid and grubs hatch out to feed greedily on the roots. This double attack, which can reduce the yield by as much as 85\%, is serious both for individual farmers and for the great 12 year scheme for the Development of Italian Agriculture now in progress.

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