

## Safety Bulletin 2083

### Insect Information

Over the past week there has been several (6) cases of Rove beetle Dermatitis reported in the Orange district. The increase in reported case has been put down to the recent weather conditions and the extent of the Queensland floods.

The Rove beetle that is increasingly common in Malaysia. Their bodies contain the toxin paederin (hence Paederous dermatitis) that causes burns on human skin whenever they are crushed. Interestingly the beetles were used to burn off warts in the past. It starts off with some erythema/redness and then with patches of ulceration where the beetle has been crushed. These are some pictures I have collected over the past year in my practice.



The rove beetles are surprisingly small and very easy to miss. Normally they fly into your house via the windows as they are attracted to light at night. They can fly up apartment blocks and are common if you live near a hill or jungle.

The Rove Beetle is less than 1 cm long. The body is dark orange and the tip of the abdomen, the upper abdomen and the head are black. The upper middle iridescent greenish region of the abdomen are the hard wings (elytra). A pair of transparent wings are neatly folded and hidden under the hard wings. During daytime, the beetle will be seen crawling around swiftly with hidden wings resembling ants. When disturbed it raises the abdomen in a threatening gesture like a scorpion and can fly away. It can also run on water swiftly !

Since the beetle is attracted to lights at night, switch off or minimise the lighting and close doors/ windows during the beetle epidemic. Use fine mosquito netting, aerosol insect spray, glue traps etc. ***Do not sit near lights, do not smash the beetle on the body, just blow it away ! If there is contact with the beetle, immediately wash the affected area with soap and water.*** Those who suffer severe skin reactions should seek medical attention.



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