Red chilli to control cowpea weevil

Recognize the problem
Cowpea weevils bore holes into stored seeds of both improved and local varieties of cowpea. A powder or dust can be seen and adult cowpea weevils are present. Damage looks like round holes in the seeds. Adults are reddish-brown. The tumbus (larvae) look like maggots. The cowpea weevil is a serious economic pest on the crop. The seeds lose their market value and taste and quantity is reduced a lot.

Background
Eggs of cowpea weevils hatch into tiny tumbus 5-20 days after being laid. The tumbus feed inside the seeds and grow into adults. If the cowpea weevil is not controlled it will multiply very quickly.

Management
Dried chilli pepper is an effective control of cowpea weevil in stored cowpea seeds.
- Dry matured cowpea seeds to 7-10% or for as long as one month in the sun.
- Mix dried seeds with whole dried red chilli peppers and put the mixture into an air tight container with a lid.
- Make sure the container is filled to the top to stop any eggs or adults of weevils from breathing. This will kill the eggs or adults.
- When the cowpea seeds are taken out of storage, the dried red peppers that were mixed with the cowpeas can also be used for cooking.

Scientific name(s) > Callosobruchus maculatus

The recommendations in this factsheet are relevant to: Ghana, Sierra Leone

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