

## Searching for Potato Beetles (July 1950)

### Abstract

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In the summer of 1950, an infestation of potato beetles throughout the GDR threatened to destroy the potato crop. It was not long before official state propaganda used the infestation to its own advantage: misinformation was spread that the Americans had dropped the potato beetles from airplanes in order to disrupt the GDR's potato supply. Similar rumors had also circulated during the Nazi period. GDR citizens were instructed to remove the beetles and their larvae from their fields and gardens. This photograph shows GDR citizens in the Thuringian town of Sömmerda looking for beetles in their vegetable gardens. The official caption by the GDR news agency ADN read: "New potato beetle attack by the U.S.A. imperialists. In their increased hatred toward the successful build-up of the peace economy of our republic, the U.S.A. imperialists do not shy away from using hateful instruments of terror. So it was that they inflicted the potato beetle attack on the German Democratic Republic. In recent days, American airplanes once again dropped potato beetles; but successful search operations to effectively combat this pestilence are occurring everywhere."

### Source

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Source: Bundesarchiv Bild 183-R87276, unknown photographer.

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<https://germanhistorydocs.org/en/occupation-and-the-emergence-of-two-states-1945-1961/ghdi:image-2972> [March 19, 2025].