

STINK BUGS

The Brown Marmorated Stink Bug (“BMSB”) is a relatively new pest to Michigan. Many Michigan residents have seen this new invasive pest crawling around inside their homes in the past few years. Similar to the multicolored Asian lady beetle, this stink bug enters buildings in the fall to overwinter and can be a serious nuisance. Some infestations can reach staggering numbers. In the eastern states where this pest is established, over 25,000 bugs have been reported in a single home! The BMSB is native to Asia and has few predators in North America adapted to feeding on it. Consequently, it continues to spread across the U.S. in large numbers. Unlike the multicolored Asian lady beetle, the BMSB feeds on plants and can cause massive damage to a wide variety of fruits, vegetables, nuts, legumes and other crops in Michigan. Therefore, BMSB is a not only a nuisance pest to homes and gardens but an economic pest of agriculture.

When threatened or crushed, the BMSB emit defensive secretions that have an unpleasant odor. Stink bug frass stains walls and curtains in homes (Inkley 2012). Although they do not harm people or pets by spreading disease, large infestations in homes can contribute to airborne allergies (Mertz et al, 2012). During the fall invasion, BMSB will seek out secluded, dark places in homes to overwinter. During the coldest months, the stink bugs are relatively inactive and may go unnoticed by home occupants. Once the weather warms, however, the stink bugs will begin crawling and flying around the home as they attempt to exit, feed, and reproduce.

Currently, the BMSB is most commonly found in the southern and central areas of the State and is often associated with urban areas. Reports of home infestations are wide spread, including areas of Detroit, Grand Rapids, Kalamazoo, Lansing, St. Joseph, and Jackson. It has been detected as far north as Traverse City. Major highways and traffic coming between cities are corridors for dispersal.

Eradication

The best way to remove stink bugs from a home is a vacuum cleaner. A shop vacuum is recommended because stink bug odor can absorb into conventional vacuum cleaners. The BMSB can also be killed by dropping them into a pan of soapy water.

Some resourceful people have found that mounting a light or desk lamp above a pan of soapy water makes an inexpensive indoor trap. The stink bugs are attracted to light above the pan and will then fall into the pan and drown (Quarles 2014).

Using pesticides indoors to eradicate BMSB is not recommended. Aerosol foggers used in living spaces will not kill BMSB that are sheltered in crawl spaces or wall interiors, and applying pesticides inside of walls or crawl spaces will likely attract other insects and pests to feed on the BMSB carcasses (Quarles 2014).

Michigan State University Extension: The Brown Marmorated Stink Bug (BMSB): Information for Michigan Residents on a New Home Invader

The **Master Gardener Hotline** is open from April to October, Monday through Friday. Lines are available 9:00 am to noon and 1:00 pm to 4:00 pm at 888-678-3464

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