

February 19, 2021

Brown Marmorated Stink Bugs

For me there is no hesitation. As the bug drops out of the air landing next to me on my food counter, my immediate answer is: Slap!

The newest home invader in our area is the brown marmorated stink bug. It is an invasive pest from Asia that was accidentally introduced into eastern Pennsylvania sometime prior to 1998. It has become a serious pest of fruits, vegetables, and farm crops as well as a nuisance pest inside homes as it has since spread across the United States.

It gets the marmorated name from the mottled brown colors that occasionally include some light tan to almost white. The name 'stink bug' refers to an obnoxious and pungent odor emitted when this insect is disturbed.

The numbers of this insect continue to rise as it feeds with its long sucking mouth parts on things from apples and apricots to soybeans and corn. As the field numbers rise so will the amounts found in our homes. The numbers of this insect have only begun to rise in our area.

Along with the asian lady beetles and the native boxelder bugs, this brown marmorated stink bug tries to get into our homes in the fall. They all can best be controlled from getting in the home, by spraying around the foundation in the fall with an insecticide with the active ingredients bifenthrin, permethrin and lambda-cyhalothrin. These ingredients are found in many of those ready-to-use spray jugs for home pest control and they will control the bugs.

Inside the home, I like to use the vacuum on lady bugs but in the case of this stinky beast, the vacuum may help to spread its odor. That is why my solution is smack and remove. That is what I practice.

What is the long-term answer to this invasive bug from the Orient? Call out the samurai. Not the human version, but another insect called the samurai wasp. This natural enemy of this stink bug has also been accidentally introduced to our country and it paralyzes them by laying their own eggs inside the stink bug eggs. It is also very specific to brown marmorated stink bugs and it does not sting humans. It is a perfect, natural control for this problem.

As the levels of the stink bug increase in our area, so will the natural predators. But do not be mistaken, the stink bug is around and it will continue to be a pest of our gardens, crops and homes. Whenever you see one, slap it for me.

Mark Kepler

Extension Educator- Agriculture and Natural Resources

Purdue Cooperative Extension Service-Fulton County

1009 West Third Street

Rochester IN 46975

574 223 3397 <http://www.ag.purdue.edu/counties/fulton/pages/default.aspx>

<https://www.facebook.com/Purdue.Extension.Fulton>/<https://www.facebook.com/Purdue.Extension.Fulton/>