



Ornamentals

Boxelder Bug

Pest Fact Sheet **54**

Introduction

The boxelder bug, *Leptocoria trivittatus*, feeds primarily on the pistillate or seed bearing boxelder trees by sucking sap from the leaves, tender twigs, and developing seeds. In heavily infested areas, the insect may attack ash and maple trees and the fruits of raspberry and strawberry plants.

The plant damage is not considered serious, but the insect themselves can be a nuisance to homeowners. In the fall, the adults may congregate in large numbers in or on the outside of houses, seeking a place to hibernate.

Description

The adult bug is about 1/2 inch long, brownish-black in color, with three longitudinal red stripes on the thorax and red margins on the basal half of the wings. Under the wings, the abdomen is bright red.



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Life cycle

Over-wintering adults leave their hibernation areas with the coming of warm spring weather and begin laying red eggs in crevices of boxelder bark, on the top of leaves, and other objects. Eggs hatch in 11 to 14 days.

Nymphs are wingless (though they possess wing pads) and dark towards the head, with red abdomens. The nymphs feed on leaves, fruits and soft seeds by inserting their beaks into the tissues. They continue to feed throughout the summer until they reach adulthood. Adults may emerge mid-summer, giving rise to a second generation that matures in the fall. The insect may become a problem at this time, accumulating in residential areas in search of favorable hibernation spots. These spots may include attics, cellars or any protected area.

Control

To eliminate the bug problem completely, remove all pistillate (female) boxelder trees from a given residential area and replace them with either staminate (male) boxelder trees or with a tree species that has fewer insect problems.

For chemical control, spray when young nymphs appear in late May or early June. Consult your county Extension Educator (see county office telephone listing on reverse side) for specific pesticide recommendations.

UNH Cooperative Extension County Office Telephone Numbers

Belknap

(603) 527-5475

Carroll

(603) 539-3331

Cheshire

(603) 352-4550

Coos

(603) 788-4961

Grafton

(603) 787-6944

Hillsborough

Goffstown
(603) 641-6060

Merrimack

(603) 796-2151

Rockingham

Brentwood, NH 03833
(603) 679-5616

Strafford

(603) 749-4445

Sullivan

(603) 863-9200

***Stop!** It is always the pesticide applicator's responsibility, by law, to read and follow all current label directions for the specific pesticide being used. Contact the NH Division of Pesticide Control at (603) 271-3550 to check registration status. Store pesticides in their original containers in a locked cabinet or shed away from food. Dispose of unused pesticides or empty containers safely, according to NH regulations. If you suspect pesticide poisoning, call the New Hampshire Poison Control Center at 1-800-562-8236.*


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