

UNH Cooperative Extension Info Line Question of the Week

Green Stink Bug (*Acrosternum hilare*)

Question: My garden is being taken over by bright green bugs. What should I do?



Answer :You have green stink bug (*Acrosternum hilare*), an insect commonly seen in gardens in late summer. This year the number of stink bugs is phenomenal, possibly due to the warm winter and hot summer. Green stink bugs are general feeders and are found on trees and shrubs, weeds, fruits and vegetables. Favorite vegetables include tomatoes, beans, corn, eggplant, and peppers. They feed by inserting their piercing, sucking mouth parts into fruits and vegetables and sucking out the sap. Damage often appears as pimples, wart-like growths, catfacing or white marks (like halos) on the fruit.

Green stink bug is a flattened, shield-shaped bug, named for the foul odor it gives off when picked up or crushed. The adult is bright green, about 2/3 inch long, and is easily identified by the triangular-shaped plate that partially covers its wings. They overwinter as adults and begin to lay eggs on leaves in late spring. In late summer nymphs molt to become the adults you see now. Cleaning up garden residues and weedy areas will reduce the amount of available food, hiding places, and overwintering sites.

What else can you do? The simplest thing to do is to walk around the garden with a container of soapy water, pick the bugs off your plants and drop them into the water. Do this when it's cool and insects are sluggish. There are organic controls which are very effective on nymphs and many backyard insecticides for fruits and vegetables are labelled for stink bugs. Also, don't plant sun flowers near your garden; stink bugs are highly attracted to them.

Got questions? UNH Cooperative Extension Education Center's Info Line offers practical help finding answers for your lawn and garden questions. Call toll free at 1-877-398-4769, M-F, 9:00 a.m.-2:00 p.m., or e-mail us at answers@unh.edu