

Don't Let Insect Intruders Get the Best of You This Winter

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By the end of November, most of us are ready to settle in for a nice warm bug-free winter. Unfortunately, some insects, like lady beetles, boxelder bugs and brown marmorated stink bugs have also decided to move into our homes to keep us company. In October when the weather cools, these insects take advantage of cracks and crevices, as well as the occasional open garage door to find their way into your living area. While many of these insects lay dormant until springtime, some of them will become active during sunny days when the home heating system lulls them into thinking summer is coming. When this happens, they can fly inside the house and become a real nuisance. While none of these insects can threaten your health, each has its own unique and unpleasant smell.



Figure 1. Lady beetle wall void.



Figure 2. Collect and remove ladybugs and other invaders without contaminating your vacuum cleaner by intercepting the insects with an inverted sock attached to the tube with a rubber band.

Once these insects are in your home, they are difficult to remove. Although you can kill them with pesticides, it is often far easier to sweep or vacuum them as you find them. Avoid contaminating your vacuum with a stinky insect smell by intercepting these insects with a nylon sock placed in the vacuum tube (Figure 2). After you have collected the insects, you can tie up the sock and dispose of it in the trash, or simply shake the insects outside into the cold where they will freeze.

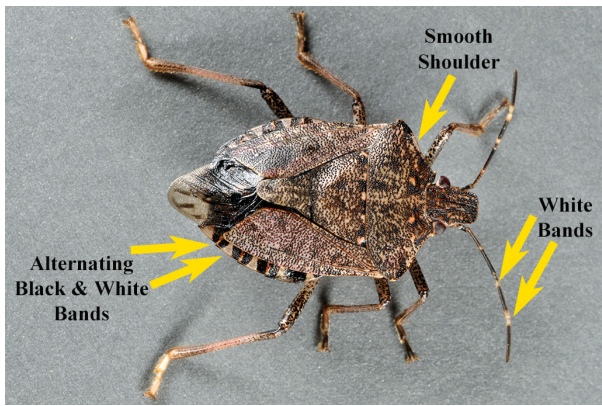


Figure 3. Brown marmorated stink bugs can be identified by the white bands on their antennae and the distinctive white and black markings on their hindwings. They emit a pungent odor when handled.



Figure 4. Boxelder bugs feed on maple seeds in the fall. They often will move indoors to spend the winter as adults in your home.



Figure 5. Leaf-footed bugs are one of many insects that feed on seeds and can winter in your home.

Resources

Asian Lady Beetle.

<https://extension.entm.purdue.edu/publications/E-214/E-214.html>

Brown marmorated stink bugs

<https://extension.entm.purdue.edu/publications/E-273/E-273.html>

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