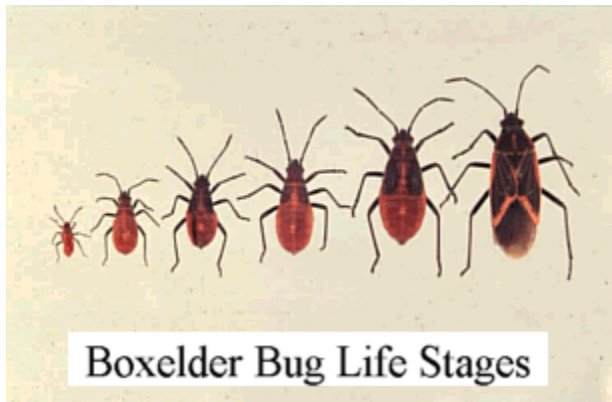


Problem: Boxelder Bug - *Leptocoris trivittatus*



Hosts: Primarily Boxelder (*Acer negundo*) but maple and ash trees may also be attacked if populations are extremely high.

Description: The boxelder bug feeds on the flowers and seeds of female boxelder trees, but does not cause serious injury. It is chiefly an annoyance pest in the home. The adult is about ½ inch long, blackish with three red stripes on the thorax and red at the base of the wings. The nymphs are smaller and have red abdomens and lack wings. These young bugs usually are found on low vegetation near boxelder trees until seeds are formed on the tree. The nymphs then feed on the seeds. Feeding nymphs do not appear to cause significant damage to boxelder.

This insect overwinters in the adult stage and seeks protection in houses, walls, around doors and windows, and various other cracks and crevices. They prefer southern or western exposures. In the spring, the adult boxelder bugs seek out female boxelder trees and deposit eggs primarily in the crevices in the bark. Newly hatched nymphs find their way to tender young leaves and begin feeding. They may also feed on flowers and, later, on the seeds. Though multiple generations per year are possible, in most of its range, only one generation per year is completed.

Recommendations: Long-term control is possible if all female boxelder trees are removed. Direct control procedures are best attempted when overwintered adults congregate on host trees in late April and early May, or when first generation adults gather on host trees later in the summer.

Caulking and screening can help reduce the number of insects that are able to invade the home. Those inside the home can be swept up with a vacuum. Remove and seal the bag after vacuuming or insects may escape. A wet/dry vacuum (Shop Vac) can also be used with soapy water added to the tank to drown the insects as they are pulled in.

References:

1. [Boxelder and Red-Shouldered Bugs](#), K-State Research and Extension, Entomology Publication MF-2580
2. [Boxelder Bugs](#), Colorado State University Cooperative Extension, no. 5.522

Last Update: 1/12/2018

Brand names appearing in this publication are for product identification purposes only. No endorsement is intended, nor is criticism implied of similar products not mentioned.

“Knowledge for Life”

Kansas State University Agricultural Experiment Station and Cooperative Extension Service