

New Insect Pest May Have Been Found in Bristol

Many have called the Extension office with complaints about the multi-colored Asian lady beetle and the box elder bugs, but now there is a new pest. The Brown Marmorated Stink Bug was identified in Knoxville in March of 2009 and now in the Tri-Cities in the past weeks. I received calls this week from several individuals about this pest. It was first discovered in the United States in 1996 and has since been identified in California, New York, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Oregon, Virginia, and West Virginia. It has been confirmed in Tennessee and here locally as well.

UT Extension Entomologists say other stink bugs are often found around structures and landscapes and homeowners shouldn't assume that the stink bug you have found is the BMSB.

The BMSB can become a persistent pest much like the lady beetle and the box elder bug. They can build up in large numbers congregating on the sides of structures. Vail says the stink bug will release an obnoxious odor if it is disturbed or crushed.

Entomologists from across the U.S. are concerned that this stink bug may become a pest of ornamentals and agricultural crops. It has been observed feeding on ornamentals, fruit trees, legumes, and vegetables in Pennsylvania and New Jersey.

Much like the lady beetle and the box elder bug, the BMSB begins to search for overwintering sites when temperatures begin to get cool. If they find their way into your home, they'll be with you until spring. These bugs will be more active and visible in the landscape and around structures on warm days in the fall and winter. While the BMSB has the potential to become a pest of agricultural and ornamental plants, the immediate concern according to UT Extension Entomologists is the bug's ability to overwinter in structures like the multi-colored Asian lady beetle.