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# BROWN MARMORATED STINK BUG

Homoptera, Pentatomidae: *Halyomorpha halys*

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## Distribution and Hosts

The Brown Marmorated Stink Bug, (BMSB), is found throughout Virginia. The BMSB an invasive insect not native to Virginia or North America. It was accidentally introduced near Allentown, PA in 1998 and has spread since that time. It feeds on a wide range of fruits and seedpods and has the potential to be a pest on peaches and soybeans. For homeowners, it is mainly a nuisance pest, as it invades houses in the winter looking for a place to over-winter.

Fig 1. Adult Brown Marmorated Stink Bug, *Halyomorpha halys* (Tim McCoy)

## Identification:

The BMSB is about 3/4 inch long and has white bands on the antenna, alternating black and white spots on the abdomen, and it lacks spines on the front of the thorax.

## Life History

The BMSB overwinters in the adult stage in protected places including houses. It does not lay eggs in the house nor does it multiply in structures. In the spring adults leave the overwintering site seek potential host plants including peaches and soybean and lay eggs. Nymphs feed on fruits and seedpods and develop throughout the summer and molt to adults in late summer.

## Control

On plants: Spot spray when and where they are found causing damage. Late July and August are the most common times to see damage on plants. Check corn, peppers, tomatoes and fruit trees, although this bug can be a pest on a wide variety of plants. Check plants with developing and seed heads and fruit. Treat with an insecticide appropriately labeled for that plant or situation.

Prevent stink bugs from getting inside: Any home or structure with a history of having stink bugs over-wintering inside needs to have preventative measures taken during the summer to prevent re-infestation in the fall. Exclude stink bugs from the house by sealing up cracks around windows, doors, utility access points, chimneys, siding, trim, and fascia. Caulk can be used to seal many cracks, but attic and foundation vents, and weep holes will require wire mesh or screening. Do not seal cracks if the insects are already inside because they will be trapped and die indoors.

Control stink bugs before they get inside: Spot treatments using a microencapsulated or wettable powder insecticides can be applied in the early fall around windows, doors, attic vents and other locations on the south and west walls of the structure. Often the size of the building may prevent access points that are high off the ground from being treated, so screening and caulking from the interior will still be necessary. Note that all insecticide applications have to be carefully timed. Applying too early will allow the insecticide to degrade before the stink bugs begin to come in. Applying after the stink bugs have arrived will allow many stink bugs to still enter the interior of the buildings.

Control after they get inside: Caulk around baseboards and exhaust fans, light fixtures, and trim to prevent stink bugs from accessing interior rooms from basements, drop ceilings and attics. Vacuuming best controls individual insects. Spraying stink bugs with insecticide after they get inside still obligates your to vacuum up their dead bodies, so skip the insecticide and go straight to the vacuum. Avoid treating stink bugs you cannot reach with the vacuum with insecticide. If they die inside the wall-voids or attics dead stink bugs can lead to infestations of carpet beetles and other pests that feed on the stink bug carcasses.

Revised 11/17/2009