

Household and Structural

Department of Entomology

BROWN MARMORATED STINK BUG IN HOMES

Timothy J. Gibb, Extension Entomologist
Photo credits: John Obermeyer

The brown marmorated stink bug (BMSB) is an invasive pest from China, Japan, Korea and Taiwan that was accidentally introduced into eastern Pennsylvania sometime prior to 1998. It has become a serious pest of fruits, vegetables and farm crops as well as a nuisance pest inside homes as it has since spread across the United States.

Brown marmorated stink bugs are mottled brown in color but often confused with other brown colored insects that occur inside homes, such as brown-banded cockroaches and the leaf-footed bugs.

The name 'stink bug' refers to an obnoxious and pungent odor emitted by the scent glands when this insect is disturbed. This odor is characteristic of the family but is especially strong in the BMSB.

Adult BMSB measure about 1/2 - 3/4 inches in length and are 'shield-shaped', typical of the Pentatomidae family. This description also fits other stink bugs in the U.S. but BMSB can be distinguished by the alternating dark and light bands on the last two antennal segments and exposed lateral margins of the abdomen, as well as a comparatively rounded shoulder when viewed under magnification.

Brown marmorated stink bug adults and nymphs feed on a wide variety of host plants, including fruits, ornamental plants, trees, weeds, soybeans and vegetables. They damage



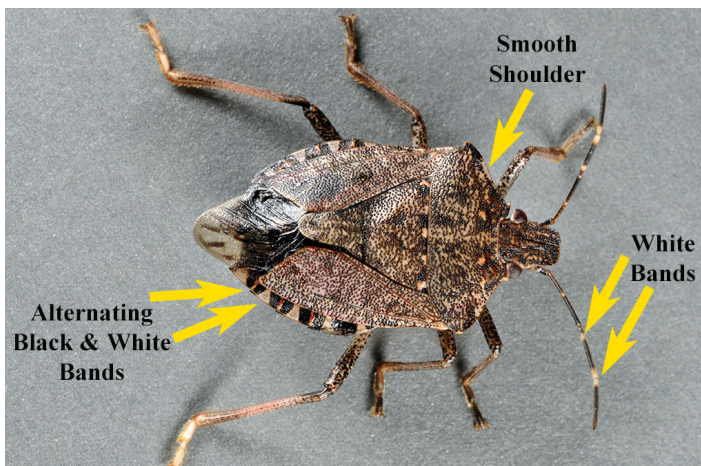
Brown-banded cockroach (left) and leaf-footed bug (right).

plants by inserting their long piercing-sucking mouth parts into the plant and withdrawing juices. Damage symptoms include shrunken and distorted fruits, necrotic spotting, and discoloration including 'cat facing' that render the fruits unmarketable as fresh products.

In Indiana, adults emerge during the spring (late April to mid-May), but are attracted to homes and buildings starting in September and continuing through October. During this time BMSB seek cracks and crevices around windows, doors, siding, utility pipes, chimneys, and underneath fascia in which to squeeze themselves. This behavior often results in brown marmorated stink bugs finding their way into wall voids and eventually into the inside of homes.

Although they do not feed or breed inside homes, they become a pest because of their presence and the odor they create, particularly as they are disturbed during warmer sunny periods throughout the winter and spring.

Mechanical exclusion is the best method to keep stink bugs from entering homes and buildings. Be certain that window and doors fit tightly and are closed when possible. Screens should be in proper condition and also must fit tightly if they are to keep BMSB out. Seal cracks around windows, doors, utility pipes, and vents with foam or silicone caulk.



Diagnostic characters of the brown marmorated stink bug
Pentatomidae: Halyomorpha halys.



Brown marmorated stink bug (left) compared to native brown stink bug (right).

Exterior surface applications of insecticides may offer some protection if applied when and where the stink bugs appear. Professional pest managers offer this as a service.

Inside homes, stink bugs can be removed manually and dropped into a container of soapy water. This not only kills them but also offers some relief from their foul odor. Both live and dead stink bugs also can be removed from interior areas



Brown marmorated stink bugs attracted to windows during late summer and fall.



Underside of brown marmorated stink bug depicting piercing-sucking mouthparts.

READ AND FOLLOW ALL LABEL INSTRUCTIONS. THIS INCLUDES DIRECTIONS FOR USE, PRECAUTIONARY STATEMENTS (HAZARDS TO HUMANS, DOMESTIC ANIMALS, AND ENDANGERED SPECIES), ENVIRONMENTAL HAZARDS, RATES OF APPLICATION, NUMBER OF APPLICATIONS, REENTRY INTERVALS, HARVEST RESTRICTIONS, STORAGE AND DISPOSAL, AND ANY SPECIFIC WARNINGS AND/OR PRECAUTIONS FOR SAFE HANDLING OF THE PESTICIDE.

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