



Asian Lady Beetle

A friendly bug is about to become unfriendly. The Asian lady beetle will be looking for a warm place to spend the winter. This normally occurs between October 25th and November 5th. Each year the Extension office receives many calls about this pest inside the home.

Lady beetles seem to be attracted to light, reflective surfaces such as large windows, or light colored walls and trim. Beetles are usually found on the sunniest areas of buildings. Homes in forested areas are prone to infestation because this beetle normally lives in trees.

Once the beetles land on the side of the building, they search out cracks and crevices that allow them entry into wall voids and attics where they often congregate in large numbers. Prevention is the key to ladybugs from getting into the homes. Caulk cracks along windows and doors and seal utility openings (dryer vents, cable TV etc.) Remember a space less than 1/8 inch will allow ladybugs entry.

When lady beetles are disturbed, they defend themselves by exuding a yellow-orange body fluid, which is their blood. This defense mechanism is termed reflex bleeding. The blood has a foul odor and can permanently stain walls, drapes, carpeting, etc. Thus, do not crush or swat lady beetles so as to minimize their defensive behavior.

Although it is uncommon, lady beetles have been reported to bite humans. However, their mouth parts do not allow them to break the skin or draw human blood.

A pesticide treatment on the outside walls around eaves, doors and windows can be effective if applied at the proper time. Late October would be about right for our area. Wettable powder and microencapsulated formulations of residual pyrethroid pesticide appear to be the most effective against lady beetles. Residual pyrethroids include a variety of active ingredients, such as bifenthrin, cypermethrin, delamethrin, or lambda-cyhalothrin. Examine the pesticide label to determine what chemical is listed as the active ingredient.

The best method of dealing with lady beetles inside the home is to use the vacuum cleaner. The beetles can be captured inside a knee-high nylon stocking that has been inserted into the extension hose and secured in place with a rubber band. As soon as the vacuum cleaner is turned off, be sure to remove the stocking before the beetles can escape. Seal the bag with the rubber band and discard the contents.

For more information on the Asian lady beetles call the county extension office at 766-6223 or visit our web site at www.aces.edu.

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