Why ladybugs enter my home and what should I do with this problem?

Xing Ping Hu

Extension Specialist / Professor

February 21, 2012

The best guess is that you are having problem with Asian Ladybird Bug, which is notorious of coming into homes in fall and winter seasons, but the majority of them end up hibernating in warm harborages outside. Most of those entered homes in fall will end up dead in spring, because they get active at warm room temperatures and use up reserves without food (aphids, scale insects, etc.). Those staying outside will emerge and get active every time when it gets warm in winter. And they will try to enter homes when it gets cold, like the weather we are having recently.

Ladybug only eats small "juicy" insects, so they do not cause damage to plants, paper, cloth or any other household items. They are merely nuisances. However, they release a yellowish and smelly liquid when they sense disturbed, which can leave yellow markings on your wall, and smell bad. There are some reports that they may bite and cause medical problems, but it is rare.

Even though they are beneficial insects, we do not want them inside our homes. I do not suggest applying pesticide to kill them in homes. The most popular way to get them out is “vacuuming them up and release the unwelcome guests outside.

Is there other means to get rid of them? Yes. There is a product called a Ladybug Black Light Trap, that attracts the bugs into it. I cannot comment on whether it really works since I never tested it and know no research data on it. Someone may recommend sticky traps but they have little effect on ladybug.

You may try insecticidal soap or diluted house-use ammonia liquid (window cleaner). They do kill ladybugs but have no residual effects.

Hope this helps.