

# TIMELY INFORMATION

## Agriculture & Natural Resources

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### Stink Bug Damage to Blueberries

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June 30, 2010

Local blueberry farmers are already harvesting their blue gems, and the industry is experiencing a heavy crop this summer. Increased number of sucking insects such as stink bugs is observed in some locations. Stink bugs feed on the fruit of a wide range of plants including beets, beans, pears, squash, tomato and corn, peaches, blackberries, and blueberries. The most common species seen in blueberry orchards are the brown and the green stink bugs (Figure 1). Their body is ½ to 1 inch long, and they have a piercing mouthpart. Stink bugs overwinter as adults in ditch banks, or row debris. They emerge in spring, feed on fruit and mate. Each female drops up to several hundred eggs. In May nymphs hatch and pass through five instars before becoming adults. Stink bugs can damage larger green and ripe fruit as shown on Figure 2, causing the fruit to become shrivelled and deformed.



Figure 1. Stink bug mating in a blueberry plant. Photo image: Rory Register, Bugwood.org.



Figure 2. Small puncture damage on the berry fruit caused by stink bugs. Photo image: E. Coneva, ACES.

Control of sucking insects with insecticide is often difficult because of the insect's capacity to reproduce rapidly. The waiting periods listed on the insecticide labels (number of days from applying or using an insecticide to when the crop can be harvested or used). For chemical control options, follow the link: <http://pmo.umext.maine.edu/factsht/suck.htm>

Trap crops targeted to stink bug managements have been shown to be very effective in some crops at certain times of the year. For more information, refer to: [http://ufinsect.ifas.ufl.edu/stink\\_bugs/bug\\_trap\\_crops.htm](http://ufinsect.ifas.ufl.edu/stink_bugs/bug_trap_crops.htm)