

Boxelder bugs

Boxelder bugs are dark brownish-black insects with reddish-orange markings around the edges of the thorax and wings. These bugs are about ½ an inch long as an adult. Nymphs, or immatures, look like adults but are smaller and do not have fully developed wings which allows you to see their bright red abdomen.



While boxelder bugs typically do not cause damage to the landscape or structure, they may become a nuisance in and around homes beginning in the fall and continuing until spring. In fall, adults and large nymphs gather in large numbers and move to overwintering areas. Boxelder bugs spend winter in cracks and crevices in walls, around door and window casings, in tree holes and in debris on the ground. Sometimes boxelder bugs try to move indoors for overwintering. On warm days from fall until spring, adult boxelder bugs emerge from their overwintering location to warm themselves in the sun.

Removing female boxelder trees from the area may solve problems with large, repeated infestations of boxelder bugs. Hiding places can be reduced or eliminated by removing debris such as boards, leaves and rocks from the area as well as sealing cracks and crevices around the home with caulk or expanding foam. If chemical treatment is desired, treat overwintering areas with chemicals containing active ingredients such as pyrethrins, cyfluthrin, bifenthrin, carbaryl or acephate.

For more information or help with identification, contact Wizzie Brown, Texas AgriLife Extension Service Program Specialist at 512.854.9600. Check out my blog at www.urban-ipm.blogspot.com

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