

Stink bugs

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Various stink bugs can be found on landscape plants, but they are all similar in looks and damage caused. Commonly seen stink bugs in Central Texas can be brown, green, mottled grey and black or sometimes red and black.



Stink bugs are shield shaped and adults have a triangle on their back. Adults have fully developed wings and are capable of flying. The wings are hardened at the base and membranous at the tip. Nymphs, or immature stink bugs do not have fully developed wings. They may appear a different color than the adults, but often this is because the wings cover the body color in the adult stage.

Stink bugs have piercing-sucking mouthparts that they use to puncture plant tissue and suck out the plant juices. Damage on foliage can appear as yellowing or curling and may stunt plant growth. On fruit, damage will appear as pinprick spots surrounded by a discolored area. Stink bugs can also carry pathogens on their mouthparts that can cause fruit to decay after it is punctured. Stink bugs cause damage in both the adult and immature stages.

To try to avoid stink bugs, reduce the amount of weeds in the landscape area. There are predators and parasites that attack stink bugs in all life stages. Try to use management practices that help to conserve beneficials. Depending on the number of stink bugs, hand picking may be an option. Use gloves and do it early in the morning before the stink bugs get moving. Remove stink bugs from the plants and put into a bucket of soapy water. Vacuuming may be another non-chemical option. Try to choose a vacuum that is powerful enough to suck up the bugs but not so powerful that it will cause damage to the plants. There are specialized insect vacuums available if growers want a non-chemical option.

Stink bugs are usually easier to manage when they are immatures, or nymphs, due to the fact that they are smaller and do not have fully developed wings which would allow them to fly away from the treated area. For less toxic solutions, you can try insecticidal soaps or botanical products with active ingredients such as pyrethrins or azadirachtin. Synthetic active ingredients include bifenthrin or permethrin.

For more information contact:

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