

~ November 17th, 2024 ~

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Multicolored Asian Lady Beetles (MALB) Infestations

We've received several calls about this occasional home invader in the last two weeks so let's talk about it. First of all, these are not our native lady beetles (lady bugs), though they are obviously related and controversially still considered a "beneficial insect" as they prey on aphids while competing with and also preying on our native lady beetles. Multicolored Asian Lady Beetle (MALB) were imported from Asia as a biological control effort to combat insect pests of trees, now they are widespread and considered an invasive. Their color ranges from yellow to red with spots varying in number and size. It can be differentiated from our native lady beetles by the black "M" or "W" (varies by POV) on their white heads.

MALBs are pests in several ways, but most relevant at this time is by being an interior pest. Attracted by high-contrast surfaces such as shutters and siding they confuse with natural overwintering sites, these cold-blooded pests make their way into homes by accident, congregating around window/door seals, soffits, attics, etc.

A few notes on control... use a wet/dry vacuum with a soapy water mix in the reservoir and simply vacuum them up. Do not crush or attempt to sweep them up as they exude a foul-smelling, yellow-orange body fluid (blood) in self-defense that permanently stains surfaces. Use of insecticides, especially indoors, isn't recommended as the pest, after being sprayed, will still need to be vacuumed up... thus simply using the wet/dry vacuum will result in less steps and less chance of accidental insecticide exposure.

Prevention can be difficult and frustrating, but effective. Seal cracks around doors, windows, utility pipes, etc. with sweeps, weather stripping, silicone, foam, or stainless steel wool. A supplemental barrier insecticide treatment outside the home can be effective if applied prior to the beetles attempt to overwinter (September/October). If a pesticide is used, please read and follow all labeled directions. For more info, see the factsheet linked below or contact your local University of TN Extension Office.

<https://ohioline.osu.edu/factsheet/ENT-44>

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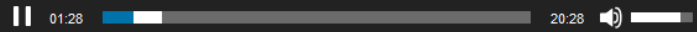
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Dr. McNeal & Dr. Adotey

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Contact the Franklin County Extension office with questions: (931) 967-2741
 Matthew Deist at mdeist@utk.edu
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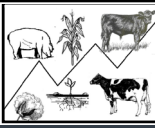
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