

Asian Invaders Attack Oregon!



The title of this article sounds a bit like a branch of Al-Qaida terrorists are about to do us in, but actually it is really about the Asian brown marmorated stink bug that is starting to show up in Oregon. This pest is common in Japan and China, but it has hitched a ride from Asia to the U.S. via commerce. It looks a great deal like our local native brown stink bug which is a beneficial insect and feeds on many unwanted soft bodied insect pests. The Asian intruder, however, feasts on plants, notably vegetables and fruits. It is therefore a threat to farmers and to home gardeners alike.

The brown marmorated stink bug (“marmorated” means marbled) was imported accidentally on the east coast a few years ago. It has a habit of finding a warm place to stay for the winter, and what could be more inviting than the warm hold of a ship. Once here it has found a new homeland. This “true bug” has recently been spotted in houses in the Portland area, probably taking shelter from our cold winter weather. Undoubtedly, it was brought to our area in commercial ships. Entomologists are doing gene studies to determine if these are different from the eastern U.S. variety. If they are the same, they may have hitchhiked on trucks bringing merchandise here from the east coast. Once established, they have no natural enemies and could reproduce freely causing an epidemic in our agricultural community.

If any brown, oval shaped, somewhat flattened true bugs are brought into the office while you are on duty, please save them for the Insect Committee to identify. They can be put into the freezer or placed in alcohol to preserve them. Also, be sure to take down good notes on the intake form, as the agriculture department is very interested in tracing these insects. Take down the exact location they were found, and be sure to get the full name, phone number and address of the client.

Together, we can keep this foreign invader from causing an agricultural calamity! Thanks for your help!

