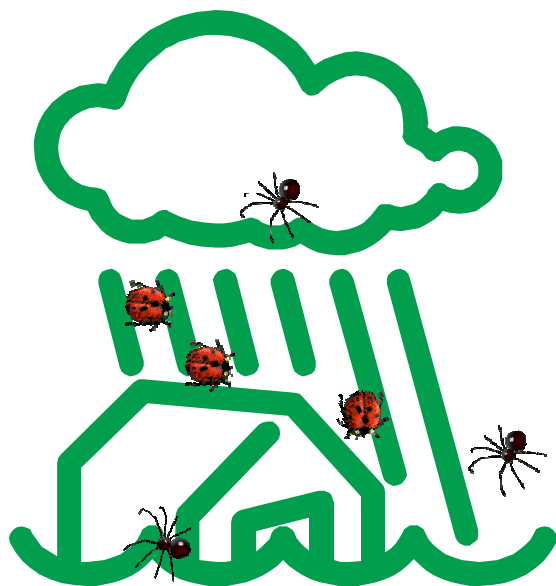


The Fall Insect Deluge



Get ready for the insects that deluge the MG office in Autumn! As you probably know, certain insects are brought in, in droves, by clients at this time every year that are the bane of gardeners and homeowners throughout Yamhill County. This year will be no different, although the deluge may start a bit earlier than normal because of the unusual weather this summer.

Boxelder bugs are one of the first scourges to arrive as questions from the public. Of course, we all watch them invade the outside of our houses, sneak into our homes and generally become a nuisance causing frustration among the citizens. Our normal advice of “leave them alone and they will disappear in a week or so” usually is not what the client wants to hear! It is sound advice, though, as the bugs are just looking for a place to hibernate and spend the winter. If the person bringing in the complaint has a maple tree in their yard or nearby in the neighborhood, the problem is multiplied since the nymphal boxelders have been feeding in large quantities on the developing seeds of these trees all year long. If you are on duty in the MG room, try to assuage their concerns by saying that, if they are in the house, vacuum them up, if outside, let them disperse on their own.

The same holds true for ladybird beetles (ladybugs) that accumulate in vast numbers in the fall. If they choose your house walls or attic to use as a hibernating area, the odor given off by the mass really isn't very pleasant. Gently squeeze a captive ladybird, sniff your fingers and you will know what I am referring to. Professional exterminators might be necessary to remedy the situation.

Spiders are a concern to citizens because the media keep putting in articles about Hobo spiders. The articles either say they are very poisonous or, lately, have said they aren't as dangerous as thought. The push for public awareness has escalated our supply of ID specimens considerably. This year we have identified a lot of spiders that people have considered to be Hobos. Most of these turn out to be giant house spiders (a non-poisonous relative) and most are males, just wandering around looking for mates. With a 2 to 3 inch leg span, these spiders tend to make people a bit panicky.

What other insects will be brought to the office in quantity this fall may be a surprise to all of us. The proliferation of leafhoppers this year and the concerns of the public suggested the title “year of the leafhopper”.

What insect will dominate in 2008? I guess we will just have to wait and see. Hopefully, nature will even out again next year and we will have everything in balance! But..... don't count on it!