



# NEWS

## Are the Beetles Bugging You?

The multicolored Asian lady beetles are out in full force this year, reports Marc Lamczyk, University of Illinois Extension ag program coordinator for Franklin County.

We had lots of soybean aphids this year, and the Asian lady beetles feed on aphids. In a nutshell, lots of aphids equal lots of lady beetles.

These beetles are beneficial insects that feed on aphids and scale on trees, shrubs and low-lying plants, but they can be a real nuisance when they get in your home.

“Lady beetles are cold-blooded creatures that search for warm spots to spend the winter,” explains David Robson, U of I Extension horticulture educator. “Many will congregate on the south side of trees or barns, often burying themselves in cracks, crevices or under piles of leaves. It appears that they release a pheromone or insect hormone that attracts other lady beetles to the same area.”

Lady beetles will squeeze through tiny cracks and crevices around windows, doors, utility pipes and loose siding to enter homes. Dark-colored homes aren’t as prone to insect invasion as white or light-colored ones.

Once inside, they tend to congregate on southern or western walls and windows for warmth. More than likely, the homeowner only sees a fraction of the beetles that are overwintering between the walls.

“The good news is that they don’t mate and reproduce indoors,” says Lamczyk. “So, they shouldn’t be a continuing problem all winter long.”

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They will bite if disturbed. If the beetles are significantly disturbed or threatened, they will ooze “beetle blood” from their leg joints. This foul-smelling liquid is not toxic, but it can stain fabrics such as carpets, upholstery and drapes.

Robson and Lamczyk offer these suggestions:

- Caulk cracks and crevices, especially on the south and west sides of your home. Make sure doors and windows close tightly. Avoid leaving windows open on warm autumn days, especially if screens are not tight. If siding is loose, secure it with nails.
- Caulk around window and door frames. Check for gaps around utility pipes, wires that enter the house and electrical outlets, and caulk if necessary.
- When you do find beetles indoors, suck them up with a vacuum cleaner. You might want to keep the vacuum out for the next month as the beetles work their way into rooms. Empty the bag regularly. Once the temperatures turn extremely cold, the number of beetles entering rooms of the house will drop drastically.
- Remember that lady beetles stain when crushed, so a regular broom or rag may not be the best bet.
- Multicolored Asian lady beetles are attracted to “black light traps.” The trap is basically a collector bag placed under a black light bulb. The beetles fall in the trap and cannot escape. They aren’t killed, so they can be put back outside.
- If you have a north entrance to your home, you might want to use that door rather than one on the south or west side.
- University of Illinois Extension does not recommend insecticides for beneficial insects, though several products are available. Contact a professional exterminator to apply a pyrethroid-based barrier on the outside.

If you have further questions or need assistance, contact Lamczyk by phone, 618-439-3178, or email,

[lamczyk@illinois.edu](mailto:lamczyk@illinois.edu).

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