

Hitchhiking Stink Bug Could Find Way To Arkansas

LITTLE ROCK, ARK.

A highly mobile stink bug that's causing problems in 26 states could eventually hitchhike its way to Arkansas, according to the University of Arkansas Division of Agriculture.

The brown marmorated stink bug is native to Asia, but it made the United States its home in the 1990s when it hitched a ride to this country.

"This pest has spread quickly over several states by hitching rides on various human transportation," said Scott Akin, assistant professor and extension entomologist with the University of Arkansas Cooperative Extension Service. "They can utilize cars, trucks, trains

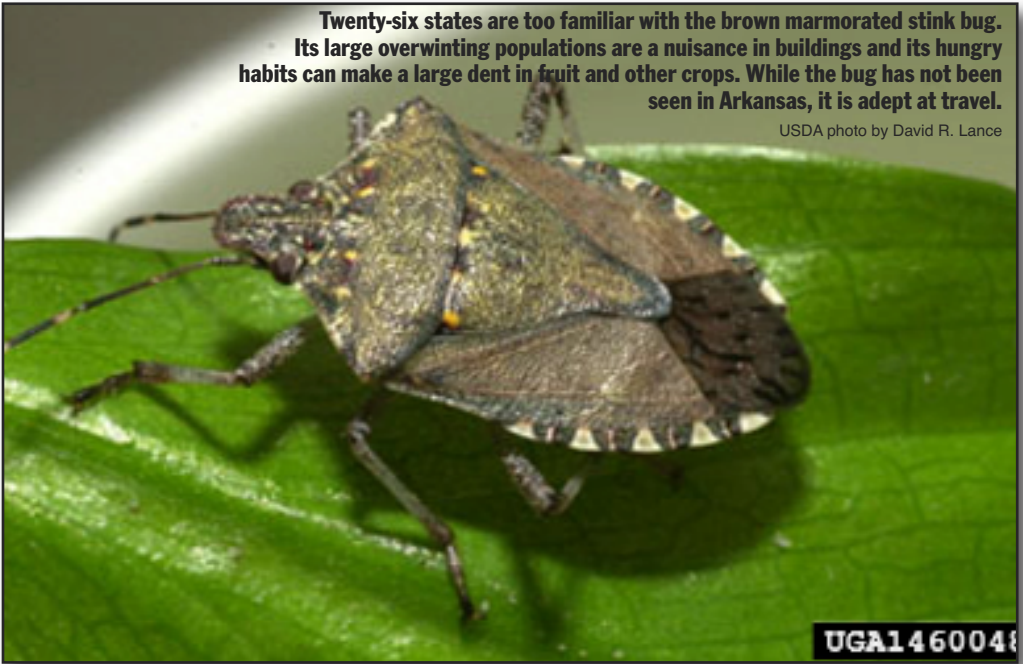
green peppers as well as various trees, woody shrubs and weeds.

Eggs of brown marmorated stink bugs are barrel-shaped and similar to stink bug species usually seen in Arkansas crops. The eggs are light green or yellow to almost white in color, tend to darken with age and are laid in groups of 25 to 30. The yellowish red and black nymphs are relatively easy to see, and their dark red eyes are easily distinguishable on the black head. The abdomen progresses to off-white with reddish spots, and the legs, head and thorax of the nymphs are black. Antennae have black with white bands.

Adult brown marmorated stink bugs have a

Twenty-six states are too familiar with the brown marmorated stink bug. Its large overwintering populations are a nuisance in buildings and its hungry habits can make a large dent in fruit and other crops. While the bug has not been seen in Arkansas, it is adept at travel.

USDA photo by David R. Lance



and other vehicles, and this could eventually pose a threat to Arkansas row crops such as soybean, and perhaps even corn and cotton."

The brown marmorated stink bug has been identified from Maine to North Carolina, as well as Iowa and California. In the northeastern U.S., these pests were initially reported as a nuisance in homes and other buildings as they overwintered, but as the population rapidly increased, they caused damage to fruit and vegetable crops the following growing season. Last year, the insects caused localized losses of fruit crops to fruit crops in some areas of the northeastern U.S.

Akin said the brown marmorated stink bug has a wide range of hosts on which to feed, using piercing sucking mouthparts that damage and kill fruit tissues.

Hosts include apples, peaches, citrus fruits, figs, mulberries, persimmons, blackberry, wine grapes, field corn, sweet corn, ornamental plants, soybeans, tomatoes, lima beans and

shield-shaped body and are typically one-half to five-eighths of an inch long. They can be hard to see because of their mottled brown-grey color. The most notable is that several abdominal segments protrude from beneath the wings, resulting in a black-and-white checkerboard-like appearance on the edges of the abdomen. The antenna has a white band on it, which easily distinguishes this stink bug from other native brown-colored stink bug species.

Stink bug species whose adults can be confused for brown marmorated are the brown stink bug and spined soldier bug. The brown stink bug adult has almost no white and few abdominal segments showing. The beneficial spined soldier bug also can have easily-viewed abdominal segments from above, but has little white coloration as well as sharp points on the shoulders.

If you find a stink bug and have questions about its identity, bring a sample to your county extension office. △