

Bordered Plant Bugs

03.01.2016

Q. I have a lot of small dark bugs with orange edges. They crawl over the patio and are a real nuisance. What are they and how do I get rid of them?

A. The bug that you have described and shown in pictures is a “bordered plant bug” (*Largus succinctus*). The adults are about ½-inch long, oval and flatish. Their backs are steel blue with reddish-yellowish markings around the edge or “borders” of the body and behind the head. The immature nymphs are metallic blue/black and have an orange triangle at the center of the back.

Bordered plant bugs are classified as true bugs. They have piercing-sucking mouthparts that are used to extract liquid from plant tissues. They feed on the most nutritious parts of plants, such as flowers and fruit.

In spring, the female lays eggs in cracks and crevices. The nymphs hatch in a few days and grow to adults during the summer. These adults mate and lay eggs. This second generation grows to full size by the end of summer or early fall. They overwinter in dry, sheltered areas (in tree hollows, under rocks and boards; in cracks and crevices; in door and windows casings; around building foundations, etc.) They become a nuisance on patios and sometimes indoors when they accumulate in significant numbers.

The bordered plant bugs don’t usually cause problems with plants; however, they can be a nuisance. In most cases there is no need for control of these bugs, since they don’t cause significant harm to ornamental plants. However, the bugs can cause damage to developing fruit (scarring of strawberries/blueberries).

Removal of bugs by hand into a bucket of water, vacuuming up with a shop vacuum, or stepping on them is recommended. Removal may be especially effective in spring, before the bugs have a chance to lay eggs. No chemical controls are recommended. Try to reduce overwintering locations around your house.

For more information on these bugs go to the UC Davis Pest Notes site at <http://www.ipm.ucdavis.edu/PMG/PESTNOTES/pn74114.html>