

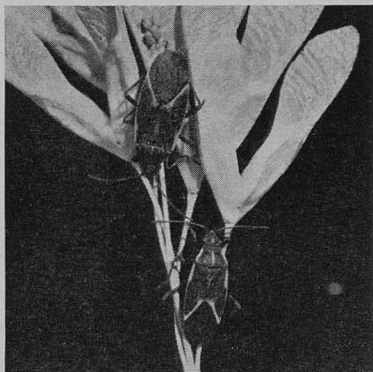
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BOXELDER BUG

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PAIR OF BOXELDER BUGS

Female above, near batch of eggs; male below. Light-colored parts in the picture are orange or bright red on the bugs.

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THE boxelder bug is a pest. It does no great harm to boxelder trees or to people, but it is an annoying thing to have around. It might, therefore, be called a plague rather than a pest.

It shows up in greatest numbers in the fall, from early September on into November. At that time of the year, the mail of the division of entomology, University Farm, St. Paul, gets great numbers of letters, also packages containing specimens. The senders of these letters and packages wish to know what the bug is and what they can do to get rid of it. This folder is designed to give the kind of information called for.

FACTS ABOUT THE BUG

The boxelder bug is, as the entomologists say, a "true bug." For the benefit of those who like scientific terms, it may be said it belongs to the order Hemiptera, and the family Coreidae. It is a relative of the true squash bug.

There is some evidence that in Minnesota it may produce two generations in a year. The adult bugs spend the winter wherever they can find shelter; in barns, outbuildings, or houses. In the spring they leave their shelters and seek the boxelder trees, on the bark and leaves of which they lay their eggs. Sometimes they leave their eggs on boards, fences, or farm machinery or other equipment. The eggs hatch about the time the

young leaves appear in the spring. Then, in feeding, the young bugs puncture the plant tissue with their beaks. This, however, does not appear to harm the trees. The bugs are especially fond of boxelder fruits, and it may be that they do not feed long enough on the leaves to do damage.

Altho the bugs prefer the boxelder tree, they may be found on maples and ash, and they have been found on the developing fruits of apples, grapes, and plums. In confinement they will also feed on the leaves of such plants as tomato, squash, cucumber, and spinach. They do little or no harm to trees, do not sting or bite, and do no injury in the home, but they are wholly lacking in consideration for the comfort of members of the human family. Consequently they become a nuisance when their numbers become considerable.

CONTROL OF THE BUG

Sprays containing pyrethrum have proved fairly effective. Nicotine compounds seem to have no effect. Among other suggestions for control are these:

1. If the bugs feed mostly on the fruits, then the planting of staminate varieties of boxelders will help. First, of course, the nurserymen would have to make these available.

2. The cutting down of the boxelders and replacing with a better variety of tree would

help considerably. From localities where no boxelders are grown, no complaints about this insect have been received.

3. To alleviate the fall nuisance of number of bugs, a tree heavily infested may be sprayed with one of the pyrethrum compounds.

4. The nuisance can be lessened by destroying the hibernating adults as they appear in numbers on the trunks of trees or basement steps, with a miscible oil, or kerosene. Boiling water poured on the hordes will also greatly reduce their numbers.