

# Bugs & Blights

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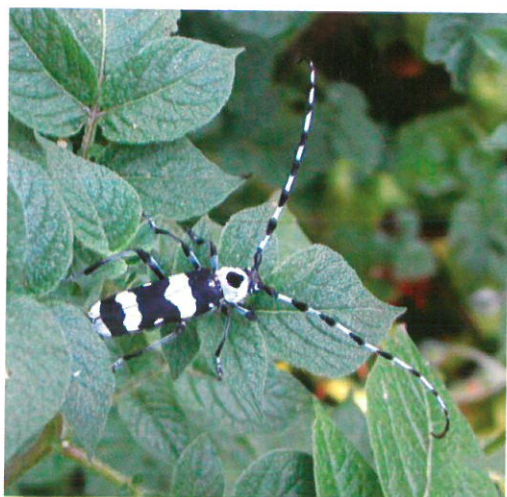
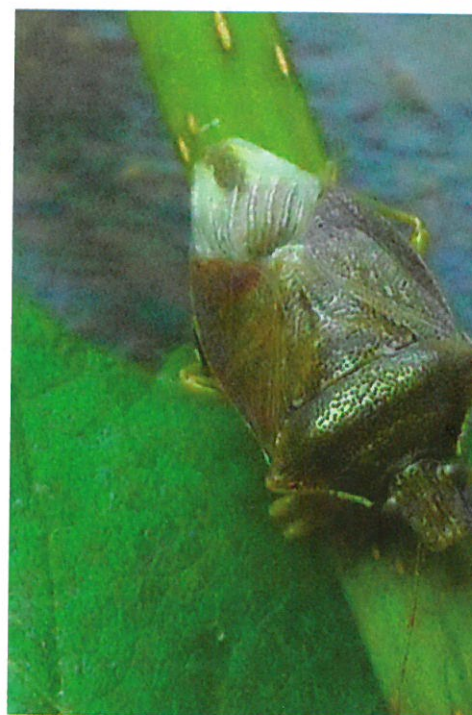
This month is ideal for an issue of *B&B* that is devoted to the insects because they soon will be devoted to your gardens and landscapes. This also gives me the opportunity to write about the insects that we don't normally cover; those oddities that the customer brings to you for advice.

May is a time when insect populations boom and that can be a good thing. After all only 1% of the insect species are pests. Insects are a host of birds and mammals and fish. Many insects are actually beneficial because they feed on other insects. Generally, at this point the conversation moves to the fab. four: ladybugs, lacewings, syrphid flies, and parasitic wasps. But this time I want to focus on the bugs customers might bring in that scurry about in the litter while eliminating pests. They quietly go about the business of eliminating pests or scavenging organic matter.

(right) Millipede - A common scavenger in composts and the garden, helping to break down organic matter. Note the paired legs (two sets per segment that distinguishes them from centipedes.

(bottom right) Millipede - Common in wooded areas with good leaf litter. Can emit a bit of cyanide which may cause a burn. Scavenger of the forest floor. Photo by Lynette S. Schimming, [bugguide.net](http://bugguide.net)

(below) Banded alder borer – attracted to dead and dying trees, attracted to fresh paint, or woodpile.





(left) Bumble bee - With a dusting of pollen on its head. These bees arrive with the crocuses and a nice day. Color patterns vary for different species.

(below) Soldier beetle - Aphid predator and flower visitor. Larvae live in the soil.



(below) Daddy long-legs - These bugs are not spiders, but are predators. I've seen them feeding on a large carpenter ant at night,



(above) Parasitic wasps (Ichneumon wasps) - prey on caterpillars, aphids, and other insects. The long "stinger" is an egg laying tube.

(above far left) Stinkbugs - generally seed feeders but some are predators. Note the triangle area behind the head, and wings of two textures

(above left) True bug - feeding on a willow sawfly

(left) Fireless firefly - This beetle has soft leathery wings and two stripes on the pronotum. Good predator. Fly in spring

