

Stink Bugs

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The family *Pentatomidae* is a family of true bugs called stink bugs. While there are many species of these bugs in the Pacific Northwest, only a few constitute occasional pest status. Of these, the two most common are the consperse stink bug, *Euschistus conspersus*, and Say stink bug, *Chlorochroa sayi*.

The Say stink bug (Fig. 1) adult is about ½ inch or a little longer, bright green with tiny white specks and several orange spots at the base of the scutellum (the triangle on the back). The consperse stink bug is ½ inch long, light brown (Fig. 2) with small black specks on the back. Overall, adults appear wedge-shaped—broader in the front than in the back end. The nymphs, or immature forms, look like the adults, but they are smaller and lack functional wings. The nymphs are also dark to black in color.

While there are several species of predacious stink bugs (Fig. 3), most stink bugs submitted for diagnosis are plant feeders. They have a stout sucking beak, which when embedded into plant tissue—the toxins associated with salivary juices cause lumpiness or distortions on the surface of fruits like peaches. In our area, the most frequent objection to their presence on crops (e.g., raspberries) is the disagreeable odor they leave and the “off taste” that they impart to the fruit.



Fig. 1. A green stinkbug on Oregon grape. By A.L. Antonelli.



Fig. 2. A brown stinkbug on raspberry leaf. By A.L. Antonelli.



Fig. 3. A predacious stinkbug feeding on a Colorado potato beetle larva. By K. Grey.

These stink bugs overwinter in ground litter as adults, becoming active in early spring, mate and lay barrel-shaped eggs on the undersides of leaves of weed hosts. The nymphs feed on weeds. After these nymphs mature into adults, they migrate to various crop plants and begin the cycle again. One to three generations occur each year.

Chemical management can be difficult for the home gardener because of lack of effective registered materials on certain crops. Seek assistance in selection of material from your local county agent or other qualified expert. Hand picking followed with mechanical destruction is another option.