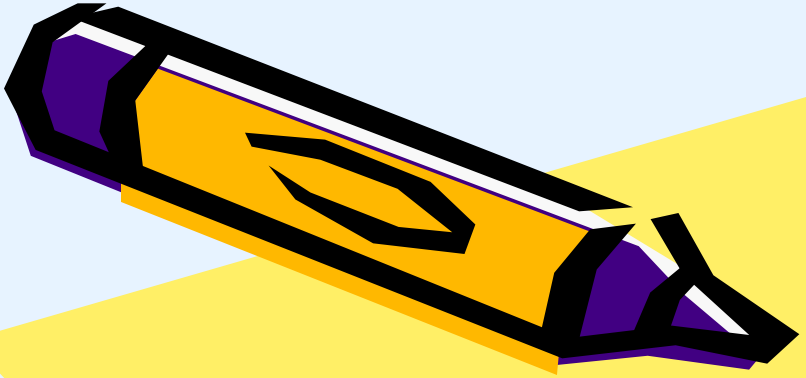
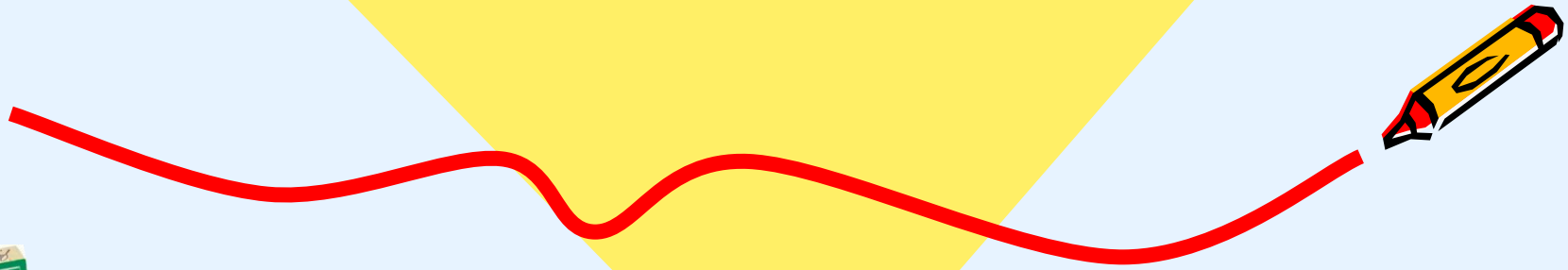
Incidental Pests

Nebraska Extension





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Incidental Pest Facts

- AKA "accidental" or "outdoor" invaders
- Come from outside; can't survive indoors
- Do not breed or feed inside
- Harmless
- Do not infest food or furnishings
- Do not attack people, pets, or property
- More a nuisance than damaging

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Boxelder Bugs

- ½ inch long
- Grayish black with distinctive red lines and red abdomen
- Nymphs often found in clusters; bright red with dark heads; no developed wings

Photo: Nebraska Extension in Lancaster County

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Boxelder Bug Facts

- Feed on plant juices from female boxelder tree; rarely cause much damage
- Overwinter in buildings
- Can stain curtains and walls
- Do not bite or sting
- Do not damage food or furnishings
- Can fly long distances from tree to tree
- Become active on warm days, even after a frost

Photo: University of Nebraska–Lincoln

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Boxelder Bugs Management

- Screen, seal, caulk prior to cold weather
- Vacuum clustered insects:
  - Outside: around vents, window wells, doors
  - Inside: around windows, doors
- Insecticidal soap can be useful outside, but limited once bugs are inside
- Do not remove boxelder trees…long distance flight makes this ineffective

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Millipedes

- Also known as "wireworms," although a true wireworm is a different species
- Multi-segmented, multi-legged "worm;" two legs per body segment
- Hard, cylindrical body
- Dark colored
- Like moist conditions

Photo: Nebraska Extension in Lancaster County

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Millipede Management

- Insecticide not really necessary, residual insecticide could have limited effect
- Caulk, seal, and repair cracks in foundation
- Remove debris and mulch away from house and out of window wells
- Vacuum insects from vents, windows, and doors inside and out.

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Centipedes

- Poison claws behind head
- Flattened bodies, one pair of legs on each body segment
- Often found under stones and in woodpiles, enter the home occasionally
- House centipede feeds on indoor insects, may be sign of pest infestation

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Centipede Management

- Remove mulch from near foundation; keep dry
- Control insect pests inside to discourage house centipede invasion
- Repair and seal foundation cracks and crevices
- If non-chemical means do not solve the problem, you can create a 3-5 foot wide barrier strip of residual insecticide (chlorpyrifos, carbaryl, etc) to prevent entry

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Pillbugs and Sowbugs

Photo: Nebraska Extension in Lancaster County

- Hard shelled, oval shaped arthropods, $\frac{1}{4}$-1/2 inch long, brown to gray, flat underside, round top
- Feed on decaying plant material, need moist environment
- Found in mulch areas, can enter home through cracks and crevices

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Pillbug/Sowbug Management

- Keep mulch and decaying plant material away from foundation (at least 6-8 inches)
- Seal or caulk around doorframes and windows
- Keep building dry (especially basements), these die quickly in non moist environments
- If non-chemical means are unsuccessful, you can create 3-5 foot barrier strip of residual insecticide (such as chlorpyrifos or carbaryl) around the foundation

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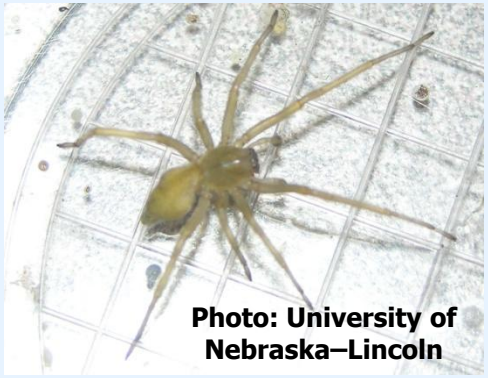

Spiders

- Spiders that originate outside and wander in can be nuisance pests, although usually harmless
  - Usually die within a few days indoors
  - Insecticides not effective
  - Vacuum or use sticky traps to remove
  - Remove webbing and debris from around the house to discourage spider entry

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Crickets

- Male chirping…annoying
- Common species in homes
  - Field cricket, black in color
  - House cricket, brown in color
- Wander in from outside

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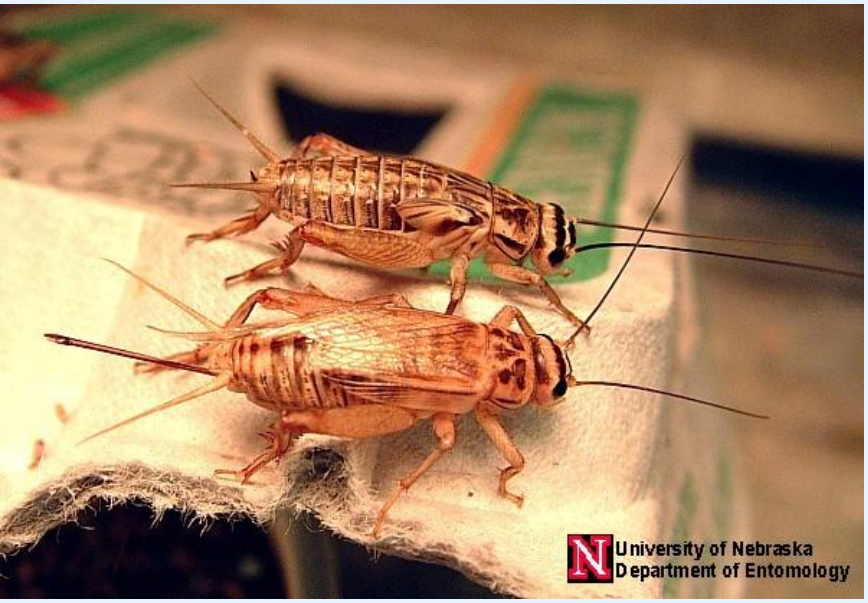
Cricket Management



- Seal and caulk cracks and holes that could be hiding places
- Remove debris away from building, keep grass short
- Put out sticky traps to capture

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Asian Multicolored Ladybird Beetles (MALB)

- Pale yellow-orange to bright red-orange
- May or may not have spots
- "M" design on thorax

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MALB Facts

- Introduced species, brought from native Asia as biological control of aphids; voracious predator
- Overwinter in buildings
- Possess secretions that can stain; have distinctive odor
- Asthma trigger
- Can bite; minor but annoying

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MALB Overwintering

- Natural habitat included cliffs in their native country. In Nebraska, they are attracted to:
  - Tall, light colored houses
  - Buildings near tree groves
  - Areas with sun exposure, especially from South and West
  - Rural and urban areas

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MALB Management

- Beetles' movement inside prompted by temperature
  - Temps below 38 degrees followed by warm, sunny days
- Insecticides not very effective unless used prior to MALB entry inside
  - Do not use once beetles are inside
- Screen, seal, and caulk prior to cold weather
- Vacuum around vents, windows, and doors inside and out

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Elm Leaf Beetles

Photo: University of Nebraska–Lincoln

- Yellow to olive green in color
- Black stripe near outside of each wing cover
- Three dark spots behind head
- Almost exclusively pest of elms
- Gregarious, congregate and may move into homes or dwellings
- Both larvae and adults feed on elm leaves, defoliating and skeletonizing them
- Two generations; May-June and July-August

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Elm Leaf Beetle Management

- Prevent entry by sealing cracks and crevices; securing window and vent screens
- Vacuum around vents, windows, and doors
- Can use pyrethrins inside to kill concentrations of beetles
- Spray elms with insecticide products labeled for use on elm trees after eggs have hatched and larvae are small.
- Insecticidal soap, Bacillus thuringiensis (*Bt*), or oil spray are good low-toxic options

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Ground Beetles

- Black, predatory
- Attracted to light
- Often come in under doors

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Ground Beetle Management

- Use yellow lights that don't draw in beetles or their prey
- Caulk and seal cracks and crevices around foundation, doors, and windows
- Vacuum up insects around window wells and doors inside and out.

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Clover Mites

- About the size of a pinhead
- Red to reddish brown
- Unusually long pair of front legs
- Found on sunny sides of buildings
- Leave reddish stains when crushed

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Clover Mites Management

- Vacuum or sweep windowsills and doorframes
- Wipe up gently with a damp paper towel or cloth
- Take care not to crush; stain easily
- Remove grasses/plants from around foundation
- Try a 18-36" barrier of rocks, gravel, etc.
- Use landscape plants not attractive to mites

Photo: Nebraska Extension in Lancaster County

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Clover Mites Management

- Insecticides/Miticides labeled for clover mites can be used in a 10-15 ft band around foundation and a few feet up walls (outdoors only)
- Create "dust" barrier around windows and cracks using baby powder, baking soda, or diatomaceous earth. The coating will kill mites
- Attach tape sticky side up where mites are seen to trap them.

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Hackberry Gall Psyllids

- 1/10 inch, very tiny; can pass through an ordinary window screen
- Die shortly upon entering a building
- Described as "flies," "gnats," or "fleas", but resemble miniature cicadas
- Attracted to lights at night

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Hackberry Gall Psyllids Management

- Replace window screens with fine mesh
- Hose down siding
- Vacuum/sweep up insects found inside
- Treat hackberry tree with systemic insecticide
- Install yellow lights (less attractive)

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Summary

- Incidental pests often come in from outside, are more a nuisance than damaging, and are usually harmless
- Create a less desirable environment by…
  - Choosing landscape plants that are less attractive or resistant to pests
  - Using yellow lights that don't attract flying insects
  - Caulking and sealing cracks/crevices around foundation, doors, and windows

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