

LIVING THE Country Life

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Not quite a lady! ^[1]

Advertorial

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Autumn is a wonderful time of year, with colorful leaves and invigorating cool weather. However for many pests, the change in season signals the need to seek shelter from the winter ahead. Lady beetles, also called ladybugs or lady bird beetles, are normally considered beneficial insects because they feed on other insects, such as aphids and scales that injure plants. However, the "Multi-colored Asian Lady Beetle," not native to the United States, can become a nuisance pest due to its annoying habit of mass gathering on sides of buildings and wandering indoors during the fall.



The Multicolored Asian Lady Beetles are oval, about $\frac{1}{4}$ to $\frac{1}{3}$ inch long, spotted and yellowish orange to dark orange-red. The name "multicolored" refers to the variety of colors of the adult lady beetles, which is determined by what they eat. These lady beetles, like other occasional invaders, do not feed or reproduce indoors, nor can they attack the structures. They do not sting or carry diseases but will occasionally pinch exposed skin. When disturbed or squashed, lady beetles give off a foul-smelling odor and leave an orange-colored slimy smear.

As autumn approaches, the adult beetles are attracted to buildings in search of protected areas to over-winter. This is in contrast to the native lady beetle species that typically over-winters in sheltered sites outdoors. Structures near forested or agricultural areas, especially soybeans, are most prone to infestation. Light colored buildings in full sun tend to attract the most beetles. Once the beetles land, they look for cracks or other dark openings for hibernation. On warm sunny winter days, they may move about inside the building and fly to windows. During the spring, these lady beetles become more evident when they are trying to make their way outdoors.

It is important to take measures to exclude these lady beetles before cool weather, with consideration for applying a preventive insecticide spray. It is much more difficult to deal with them once they have gotten inside. Seal or screen all exterior gaps and cracks especially around windows and doors, under the soffits, and around the foundation. An exterior residual spray of a pyrethroid-containing product, such as Tempo[®] SC Ultra Premise Spray or Annihilator[™] Insecticide Premise Spray can provide an effective barrier to many pest invaders when applied to potential points of entry. Timing of sprays is important – lady beetle swarming routinely starts the first warm day (over 65°) after the first frost, so be ready!

Dr. Douglas Spilker works in Research and Development for Bayer HealthCare, Animal Health Division. He received his Ph. D. from the Ohio State University, and has been involved in the development of pest control products for animal health, general pest control as well as for use in home gardening.

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