



Fact sheet

Insect Pests of the Home Garden Series

Negro Bug

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Adult negro bug.

Injury:

Negro bugs, *Corimelaena pulicaria* (Germar), sometimes called 'celery bugs', are sporadically injurious to many garden crops, including carrots, celery, corn, tomatoes, blackberries, strawberries, and raspberries. Adults and nymphs congregate in large clusters on the plant and suck out the sap, causing the leaves to wilt and die. Later they attack the lower leaves at the center of the plant. Celery may be stunted and deformed, and corn seedlings become severely wilted. Under high populations, fruit such as raspberries and strawberries often take on an unpleasant flavor.

Description:

The adult bug is 1/10 inch in length, shiny black, strongly convex, oval with a greatly enlarged thoracic shield that protects the wings. This shield

gives the bug the appearance of a hard-shell beetle, although it is actually a stink bug. Eggs are 1/40 inch in length, elongated and shiny orange when first laid but deepening to bright red just before hatching. Nymphs are very similar to adults except that they lack wings, are smaller in size, and have a blood-red abdomen. These bugs, like closely-related stink bugs, give off a foul odor when crushed.

Life History:

Adults overwinter in any protected area and emerge in early May in New Jersey. Eggs are deposited singly on the leaves of host plants, hatch in about 2 weeks, and nymphs congregate at feeding sites on the plant. Nymphs mature in July and become adults that will feed for several weeks. By early August, the adults seek a winter hibernation site before cold weather arrives.



Management of Negro Bugs:

1. The insect feeds and breeds abundantly on various weeds, especially on the umbellifers (wild carrot, wild parsley, yarrow). Eliminate these weeds, as well as neckweed (speedwell), beggarticks, tickseed, red-root, ground-nut (wild bean), and great lobelia (Indian tobacco) to reduce breeding sites.
2. Hot water (150–155°F) will kill congregations of Negro bugs on celery without causing harm to the plant. It is most effective when applied to groups of this pest when they first appear and congregate.
3. Fine mesh netting or floating row covers placed over the plants will act as a barrier and prevent the bugs from reaching the plant.
4. Populations of Negro bugs are sporadic and usually not high enough to warrant the expense of row cover or insecticide treatments. However, if an insecticide is used, a few drops of liquid detergent will increase the effectiveness of the spray.
5. Read and follow all label directions, restrictions, and precautionary statements. Days to harvest after last application varies depending on crop and pesticide—refer to the label for appropriate time intervals.

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