

# Green Stink Bugs in Your Garden



Figure 1 – Green Stink Bug Nymph



Figure 2 – Green Stink Bug Adult

Green stink bug adults are bright green with black bands on their antennae. Nymphs are multicolored (black/green, and yellow or red), rounder in shape (resembling a “beetle”).

Stink bugs are causing damage to a wide variety of vegetables in Vermont. The mild winter and warm weather may be responsible for their high numbers. They are known to feed on over 52 different plants, including native and ornamental trees, shrubs, weeds and fruits (apples, pears, plums, elderberry, cherries, blackberries, grapes) and vegetables (peas, tomato, soybeans, corn, eggplant, asparagus, beans). They cause damage by sticking their piercing/sucking mouthpart into fruit, and sucking out the sap and allowing an entry site for disease. Feeding injury results in typical catfacing, dimpling and scarring (fruit deformity) and sunken discolored or distorted plant tissues. The surfaces around the wound can become corky because the cells are dead and stop growing.

There are many natural enemies that attack green stink bugs, such as birds, toads, wasp and fly parasites, predatory bugs, spiders which is probably why usually populations are held in check.

Keep your garden area clean. Because stink bugs like to lay their barrel shaped eggs on living plants, it is important to clean up weedy areas in your yard and to remove stink bug hiding places. The females become active once the temperatures start hitting the 70's so watch for egg clusters and destroy as you find them. Don't crush the adults as that will release their fowl odor which will actually attract more stink bugs.

Stink bugs are strong fliers and will travel to find a food crop, so not only will you have to fight those breeding in your yard but incoming ones also. There are some non toxic methods to fight the bugs that come into your garden. Handpicking, yellow sticky traps, and row covers can be effective. Starting the battle early, before you actually see adults, is important because the young nymphs can cause feeding damage as well. Don't plant sunflowers near your garden as stink bugs are highly attracted to them. They can be used as a trap crop to lure the stink bugs away from your garden where they can be destroyed.

Additional control methods: Organic-they can try Pyganic, which will not work that well. Conventional-use normal garden insecticides like sevin or malathion, but best to handpick and let nature take its course!