

Kansas Insect Newsletter

For Agribusinesses, Applicators, Consultants and Extension Personnel



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July 30, 2010 No. 19

They're such a nuisance ---- Ground Beetles

Reports are filtering in regarding black beetles attracted to lighted areas especially around malls, convenience stores and downtown business areas. The beetles in question are “ground beetles” ---- a generic term applied to about 3,100 different species found in the United States and Canada.

The two current most commonly recognized species have no common name (Figure 1).

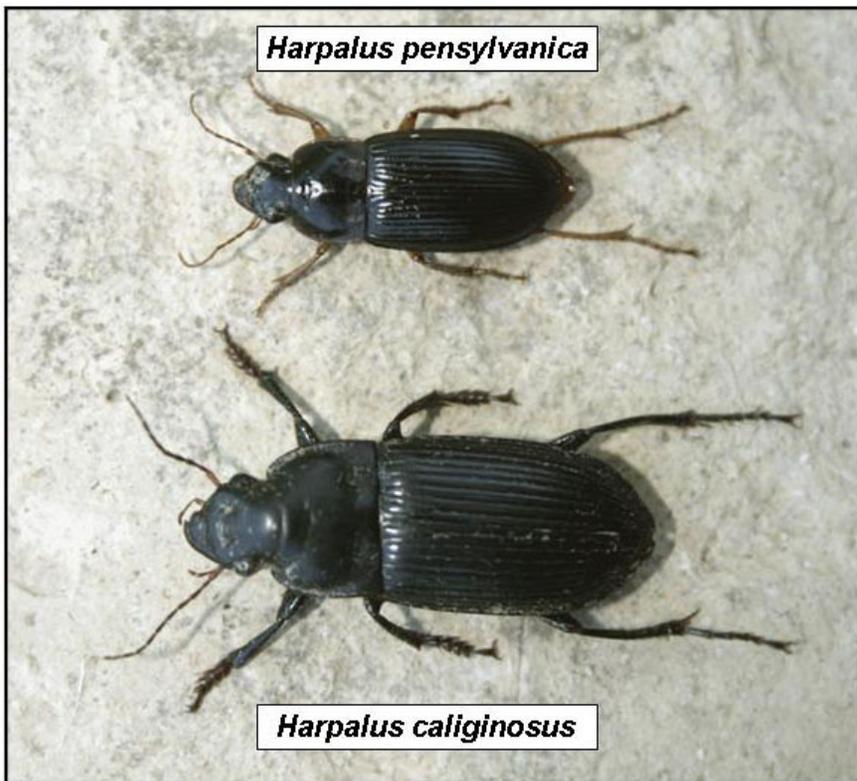


Figure 1

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Harpalus pensylvanica is the smaller of the two. Measuring 1/2 to 2/3 inch in length and with reddish-brown under body and legs, *H. pensylvanica* is a predator and therefore considered a valuable/beneficial insect. On the other hand, the totally black *Harpalus caliginosus* (measuring 3/4 to 1 inch and) feeds on seeds, calling into question its value.

Both are regarded as nuisance pests when they occur in great numbers and congregate near buildings and dwellings. Just their presence may annoy many people. Others who accept the outdoor presence of the beetles, however, change their tune when the beetles show up indoors. **NOW THEY BECOME UNWELCOME VISITORS!**

Beetles gain access to buildings and homes by slipping through tiny cracks and crevices. Attempts should be made to exclude beetles by locating and plugging up portals of entry. A perimeter spray treatment accompanying the aforementioned exclusionary preparations may help slow down/reduce numbers of beetles. Frustrations arise when beetles appear indoors despite the aforementioned control procedures. Especially when beetle populations are high, beetles may simply overwhelm: they manage to locate and exploit unseen/unplugged entryways.

The good news is that the beetles are but a transitory presence. They do not pose a health threat (they don't bite, sting or transmit disease organisms). They will not survive and reproduce indoors. Not being fabric pests, they will not chew/stain curtains, furniture, clothing or furs. Not being stored product pests, they will not contaminate food stuffs. Sometimes we just have to accept that insects will have their way despite our objections and best attempts to stave them off. Gather/collect them up (by hand or vacuum) and dispose of them.

Bob Bauernfeind

Report from the Kansas State University Insect Diagnostic Laboratory:

The following samples were submitted to the Insect Diagnostic Laboratory from July 23rd to July 29th.

- July 23 2010 – Coffey County – Lacewing eggs on soybean
- July 23 2010 – Sedgwick County – Oak flake gall on Bur oak
- July 26 2010 – Shawnee County – Electric light bug around lights
- July 26 2010 – Trego County – False chinch bug nymphs on corn
- July 27 2010 – Miami County – Predaceous diving beetles in swimming pool
- July 28 2010 – Leavenworth County – Pine needle scale on Pine
- July 28 2010 – Cherokee County – Bloodsucking conenose

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July 28 2010 – Cheyenne County – Spruce spider mite on spruce

July 29 2010 – Cherokee County – Bruchid beetles on angel trumpet

If there are any questions regarding these samples or about the identification of any arthropod please contact the Insect Diagnostician at (785) 532-4739 or GotBugs@ksu.edu.

Holly Davis

Sincerely,

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