

Statewide Emergency Pest Alert

Please Read and Please Act

In mid- to late-October County Extension Agents with the Georgia Cooperative Extension Service (University of Georgia's College of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences) and individuals from several independent pest management firms filed multiple reports (including physical samples) with the University of Georgia's Homeowner Insect & Weed Diagnostics Laboratory (Ms. Lisa Ames) and an Extension Specialist (Dr. Dan Suiter) regarding large numbers of insects that had "swarmed" onto the sides of homes and other structures (see photos below). Homeowners often complain of an offensive or bitter smell associated with the insect. Further investigation has revealed that this insect is not native to the U.S. and may be a significant threat to Georgia agriculture. Dr. Joe Eger, a research entomologist with Dow AgroSciences, in conjunction with entomologists from the USDA-ARS Systematics Entomology Laboratory (Washington, D.C.) and North Dakota State University has identified this insect as *Megacopta cribraria* (Hemiptera: Plataspidae), commonly known as the "bean plataspid". It is not previously known from the U.S. It is currently found on Kudzu in Georgia. It is native to India and China, where it feeds on Kudzu. It has been reported as a pest of numerous legume crops, including soybeans. The University of Georgia, Georgia Department of Agriculture, and U.S. Department of Agriculture are partnering to take action where appropriate. To further determine this insect's distribution within Georgia, we need your help, as follows:

- 1) First, should you (**pest control operators**) receive reports from homeowners regarding large numbers of insects on buildings or vehicles we need you to contact us with an emailed digital image of the offending insect OR the mailing of a physical sample of 20-30 insects (in alcohol in a sealed container). ALL submissions must include appropriate collection data---i.e., collection date, detailed location (street address or GPS coordinates), and the collector's contact information (name, email or phone).
- 2) Secondly, in the coming days we need you to visit a couple Kudzu patches (even ones close to your home or next to the places you shop or otherwise frequent) and look for this insect. If you find it, please notify us as outlined in #1.

Should you find this insect, either on buildings or in a Kudzu patch, please notify us immediately. We are trying to determine its distribution in Georgia so that proper actions can be taken, if appropriate.



Megacopta cribraria (4-5 mm)



Insects aggregated in a corner.



Insects on fascia boards.

Contacts:

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To avoid duplication of reports, please make contact with just one of the individuals above.