

Gregg County Office  
405 E. Marshall, Ste 101  
Longview, TX 75601  
903-236-8429

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**NEWS RELEASE FROM THE OFFICE OF:**

***DENNIS SMITH***  
***COUNTY EXTENSION AGENT***  
***GREGG COUNTY***

**Lady Bug Invasion**

Many homeowners are faced with numerous lady bugs invading their homes. The multicolored Asian lady beetle is native to Asia but occurs in many areas of the United States. This beneficial insect was released in the United States as early as 1916. More lady bugs were released in the late 1970's and early 80's. It has taken years for the populations to spread, but now large populations are found in many areas of the south, northeast, midwest and as far north as Oregon and Washington.

The multicolored Asian lady beetle is similar to other lady beetles commonly found throughout the United States. Like the familiar lady beetles, the multicolored Asian lady beetle feeds on insect pests in orchards and forests but may also occur on row crops and in gardens.

This lady beetle is an effective and natural control for harmful plant pests such as aphids, scale and other soft-bodied arthropods. Still, its tendency to overwinter in homes and other buildings, sometimes in large numbers may make them a nuisance to many people.

If agitated or squashed, the beetles have a defense reaction known as "reflex bleeding," in which a yellow fluid with an unpleasant odor is released from leg joints. This reaction helps prevent predators, such as birds, from eating lady beetles. This fluid can stain walls and fabrics.

The beneficial multicolored Asian lady beetle has resulted in a decrease in the use of insecticides in pecan orchards in controlling aphids. They have also controlled aphids on some ornamental plants. Still, these helpful beetles are an unwelcome pest in most homes.

The lady beetles are not structure damaging pests. They do not chew or bore holes in walls, or eat carpet. They do not lay their eggs in homes.

The lady beetles are attracted to lighter colors: whites, grays, yellows. The beetles enter the walls of a building through cracks and crevices. They may or may not proceed to the interior of the building.

During warm days of winter and early spring, overwintering beetles may become active. In their search for an exit they may enter the home's living areas and become a nuisance. Warmer temperatures or lighting in the living areas may attract these beetles as they search for an exit.

Preventing the lady beetles from entering is the best approach to keeping them from becoming a nuisance in the home in fall and winter. Caulking exterior cracks and crevices-before the lady beetles seek overwintering sites - is the best way to keep them out. This will also save you money on energy cost as well as keep out other pests.

Sweeping and vacuuming are effective methods for removing these unwanted pests from living areas. Using insecticides indoors for control of the lady beetles is not recommended unless the infestation is very heavy.

## **Pesticide License Recertification Program**

The Annual Texas A&M - Overton Center pesticide recertification program will be held on December 2 and 4, 2008. Producers with pesticide licenses can receive 5.5 hours at each session. Registration fee for the all day program is only \$25 and includes lunch. Topics dealing with weed control in pastures, external parasite control on beef cattle, mosquitoes, ticks and feral hog control will be covered in the program. Those planning to attend do not need to preregister. The registration fee can be paid at the meeting.

*Dennis Smith can be contacted at the Gregg County Extension Office by e-mail at [dg-smith@tamu.edu](mailto:dg-smith@tamu.edu) or telephone at: 903-236-8429.*

Extension programs serve people of all ages regardless of socioeconomic level, race, color, sex, religion, disability, or national origin.