

Wisconsin NatureMapping Asian Beetle Study

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Background Information

The Multicolored Asian Lady Beetle (*Harmonia axyridis*) has become common in Wisconsin, often creating a nuisance for homeowners. The beetle has become enough of a nuisance that many state agencies have prepared documents explaining control procedures (see links page). However, the prevalence of these organisms also makes them an ideal subject for student study.

The Multicolored Asian Lady Beetle was introduced as a biological control for Pecan Aphids. The beetle first became numerically noticeable in Wisconsin in 1994. The beetle is particularly noticeable when it collects in large numbers on the sunny sides of buildings, especially in October. The beetles collect on homes seeking overwintering sites (<http://www.uwex.edu/ces/wihort/gardenfacts/X1050.pdf>).

The beetle is about 1/3 of an inch long, oval shaped, and convex. The beetle has black spots on an orange background. There is a wide range in the shades of orange found on the beetles (<http://www.uwex.edu/ces/wihort/gardenfacts/X1050.pdf>). A distinctive characteristic is a black "M" found on their thorax, just above the wing cover. (<http://www.entm.purdue.edu/Entomology/ext/targets/e-series/EseriesPDF/E-214.pdf>). The insects give off an objectionable odor when disturbed. They also bleed from their joints which can stain clothes, walls, and carpeting (<http://www.uky.edu/Agriculture/Entomology/entfacts/trees/ef416.htm>). There is an extensive amount of additional information about the beetles and its habits available online. Please see the links page for additional information.

The high densities and widespread distribution of *Harmonia axyridis* makes it an ideal subject for study by students. Additionally, many students may already be curious about the beetles because they can become a nuisance. Students also are more likely to be inherently interested in collecting data which can be used outside the classroom.