

## Information Sheet Regarding Seed Bugs in Palm Springs

Prepared by CVMVCD, August 2, 2017



### **What are they?**

1. There have been a number of resident calls regarding an invasion of black bugs with red trim in Palm Springs.
2. These bugs are from the family of insects called Lygaeidae (lie – gee – a – dee) and are commonly referred to as seed bugs. They are found throughout the western United States, most commonly in desert areas of Arizona, Nevada, Texas, and southern California.
3. This bug is similar in appearance to other insects in such as the boxelder bug and milkweed bugs. It is not a beetle.

### **Why are they here and are they dangerous?**

1. Seed bugs pose no health threats to people or pets, but are a nuisance when they arrive in large numbers.
2. Immature and adult seed bugs feed on native desert plants and then fly to find new feeding sites or mates.
3. Adults are highly attracted to lights and can fly long distances, especially in search of succulent plants on which to feed as desert plants become dry during mid-summer.
4. These bugs reproduce rapidly when there has been a warm winter followed by abundant rainfall.
5. A combination of drying host plants and the attractiveness of lights can cause mass migrations of the bugs to urban homes and landscapes.

### **What can be done to get rid of them?**

1. Management of the bugs is difficult due to the migratory nature of adults.
2. Pesticides that kill insects on contact, such as home perimeter treatments used by licensed pest control companies, can provide excellent control of bugs that they come in contact with, but are unlikely to have any residual effects after one or two days.
3. The Coachella Valley Mosquito and Vector Control District does not treat these bugs as they pose no public health threat. Chemical treatments would need to be done by a private pest control company.
4. Businesses and homeowners are encouraged to keep doors closed and turn off lights whenever possible after dusk to reduce the risk of attracting bugs. If outdoor lights are needed, using yellow lightbulbs can reduce the attraction.
5. Once bugs get inside structures, vacuuming is the preferred method for their removal. Outdoors the bugs can be swept with a broom or blown away from business entrances, porches, or parking lots with a leaf blower.

### **How long will these bugs be here?**

1. Nobody is certain how long the insects will be around. However, reports from Arizona suggest that aggregations of adults occur in July and August, which suggests that populations are likely to become reduced over the next few weeks.