

PREDATORY STINKBUGS

A large number of species of predatory stinkbugs occur in Florida. All stinkbugs have a shieldlike shape with a large triangular area between the leathery portions of the front wings (scutellum), and five-segmented antennae. Adults are quite variable in appearance. Some specimens are solid iridescent blue, green or purple, while others are patterned with orange or red. Predatory stinkbugs are most common in Florida during the warmer months.

Predatory stinkbugs feed by jabbing prey with sucking mouthparts, and then injecting an enzyme that digests the prey's body contents. These predators have been observed feeding on Mexican bean beetles, Colorado potato beetles, weevils, velvetbean caterpillars, cabbage loopers, orange dog caterpillars, and harmful green stinkbugs. It can be difficult to distinguish between the beneficial predatory stinkbugs and the harmful plant eating stinkbugs. Often predatory stinkbugs have spines and are multicolored, while the plant eating stinkbug is green. However, observation is the best key. If the stinkbug is feeding on your plants it is harmful; if it is eating other insects it is a predator. You can also refer to the Featured Creatures website which has pictures of the common stinkbugs found in Florida to assist in distinguishing between the good guys and bad stinkbugs.



2 species of predatory Florida stinkbugs

SIZE |——|

Up to 1/2 inch

Information from UF Featured Creatures website at <http://www.entnemdept.ufl.edu/creatures/>