

***NEZARA VIRIDULA* – SETTLER OR SIGHTSEER?**

Chris Looney, Washington State Department of Agriculture, Olympia WA
Todd Murray, Washington State University Extension, Pullman WA

Nezara viridula (L.) is a polyphagous stink bug pest of gardens and production agriculture, with a particular predilection for peas and other legumes. First described from India in 1758, this species is believed to originate in Ethiopia and is now cosmopolitan in tropical and subtropical regions. In the United States, *N. viridula* occurs from Virginia to Florida, north to at least Kansas in the Midwest, and in California (Panizzi et al. 2000).

In 2014, the Washington State Department of Agriculture received queries from Seattle area gardeners about large populations of an unrecognized stink bug. Photographs were also received that summer by WSU Extension as part of the effort to track *Halys halyomorpha*. While the new stink bugs were clearly *N. viridula*, a species not known from Washington, there was a general expectation that winter temperatures would eliminate what was likely an introduction on vegetable starts from out of state. The 2014 winter was notably mild, and more sightings were reported of *N. viridula* in several other Seattle area locations in 2015. Reports of damage have been erratic, with some gardeners reporting no noticeable impacts despite large populations, and others ascribing leaf blotching on beans and cat-facing on cherries to *N. viridula*. It remains to be seen whether this species will establish permanent populations in western Washington. Cold temperatures normally limit overwintering success, but recent establishment of *N. viridula* populations in the United Kingdom, central Europe, and northern Japan are evidence that milder winter temperatures are contributing to this insect's expanding range (Salisbury et al. 2009, Musolin 2012).

Musolin DL (2012) Surviving winter: diapause syndrome in the southern green stink bug *Nezara viridula* in the laboratory, in the field, and under climate change conditions. *Physiological Entomology* 37: 309-322.

Panizzi AR, McPherson JE, James DG, Javahery M, McPherson RM (2000) Stink bugs (Pentatomidae). *Heteroptera of Economic Importance* (ed. Schaefer CW, Panizzi AR) pp. 421-474. CRC Press, Boca Raton, Florida.

Salisbury A, Barclay VML, Reid S, Halstead A (2009) The current status of the southern green shield bug, *Nezara viridula* (Hemiptera: Pentatomidae), an introduced pest species recently established in south-east England. *British Journal of Entomology and Natural History* 22: 189-194.