

**County:** Harlan

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## Lady Beetles Invading Homes

With outside temperatures beginning to warm, it won't be long before Asian lady beetles begin showing up in homes across Harlan County. These bugs typically enter the residential areas of buildings after harboring themselves inside the crawl spaces and the attic of the home during the winter. As temperatures warm during the late winter/early spring, the beetles once again become active. This usually occurs first on the sunnier, southwest side of the building. As awakening beetles attempt to escape to the outdoors, some wander inward, emerging from behind baseboards, walls, attics, suspended ceilings, etc. Since the lady beetles are attracted to light, they are often seen around windows and light fixtures.

Pest proofing your home is the most efficient way to prevent pest entry. It's best to deal with lady beetles outside, before they enter your home.

Following these guidelines will help pest proof your home or place of business. Several tips also will conserve energy and increase the comfort level this fall and winter.

Install door sweeps or thresholds at the base of all exterior entry doors, paying particular attention to the bottom corners that are a common entry location. Check for light entering under doors; this indicates possible pest entryways.

To close other potential pest entries, apply caulk on the bottom outside edges and sides of door thresholds; fit garage doors with a rubber bottom seal because vinyl seals poorly in the winter; and seal gaps under sliding glass doors by lining the bottom track with foam weather stripping one-half to three-fourths inches wide.

Utility openings where pipes and wires enter the foundation and siding are common entry points. You can use caulk, cement, urethane expandable foam, steel wool and copper mesh to plug openings around outdoor faucets, receptacles, gas meters, clothes dryer vents and telephone or cable television wires.

Apply a good-quality silicone or acrylic latex caulk to cracks around windows, doors, fascia boards and other openings. Before you apply the caulk, clean existing caulk, and remove any that's peeling to aid adhesion.

To reduce the entry of lady beetles and other overwintering pests, repair gaps and tears in window and door screens. Keep windows closed to prevent entry.

Another way to prevent pest entry is to apply an exterior (barrier) treatment with insecticides. To gain the most from this effort, apply long-lasting liquid formulations that contain synthetic pyrethroids. These products are available at some hardware, lawn and garden shops.

If you apply the barrier treatment, use a compressed-air or hose-end sprayer to treat the base of all exterior doors, garage, crawl space entrances, foundation vents, utility openings and up beneath siding. It's also useful to treat the foundation outside perimeter with a two-to-six-foot wide band along the ground and two to three feet up the foundation wall.

If lady beetles are already inside the home the best way to remove them is with a vacuum cleaner. Insecticide foggers or sprays are generally not recommended for eliminating the beetles indoors. Beetles need to be sprayed directly, or they have to crawl over a surface that is treated

with an insecticide. Using such applications will create pesticide residues on walls, counter tops, and other surfaces. Therefore, a vacuum cleaner is more sanitary and effective.

For more information, contact the Harlan County Cooperative Extension Service at 573-4464.

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