

Squashing Squash Bugs

By Charles W. Marr, Kansas State University

Squash bugs build up in large populations in the autumn season. You can usually find them on tops of vines and maturing pumpkins and squash during the warm, bright autumn mornings. At this point it will do little good to try to control them by chemical spraying. However, you can control them by removing their food source as soon as possible. In order to overwinter, squash bugs must achieve a certain degree of maturity and store internal biochemicals that serve like antifreeze to get them through the winter. When you remove pumpkin or squash vines early you reduce their ability to overwinter. Remove the vines as soon as you have harvested squash and pumpkins. This doesn't need to be with a deep tillage. Mowing, disking, or light tilling will do the job.



Make sure there are no squash bugs hiding under the debris or residue in the garden or field. This simple control will dramatically reduce the populations that you will have to deal with next spring. A cold winter will help as well.

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The TGOA/MGCA national web site thanks the author for submitting this article on October 04, 2000. Tracking number: WSP2000100400016