

BIGEYED BUG Hemiptera: Lygaeidae *Geocoris* spp.

DESCRIPTION

Adults are about 3 to 6 mm long, brown, buff-gray or black. They have large prominent eyes which are characteristic of these predators. There are at least two species found in the northwest: the western bigeyed bug, *Geocoris pallens* and the large bigeyed bug, *G. bullatus*. **Nymphs** resemble adults except they are smaller and lack wings.

LIFE HISTORY

Bigeyed bugs overwinter either as adults (*G. pallens*) or as eggs (*G. bullatus*) in trash, crop debris, or in other protected areas. Adults appear in the spring and begin feeding on available prey. Females insert eggs into plant tissues. The eggs are subcylindrical, ribbed, and pink or yellowish-white. Eggs hatch into nymphs, which feed on prey for several weeks before molting to the adult stage. *G. pallens* has two generations each year and *G. bullatus* has three.

IMPORTANCE

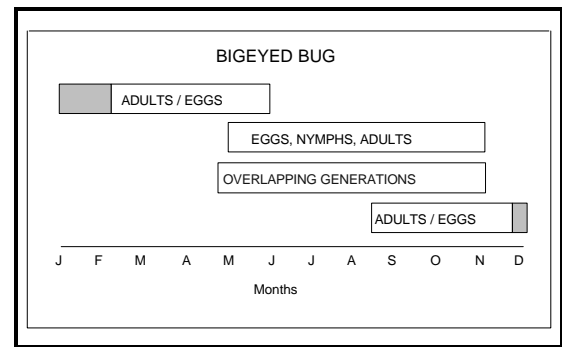
Adults and nymphs feed by sucking the body fluids from their prey. Both are effective predators of lygus bug nymphs, aphids, leafhoppers, and spider mites, although smaller nymphs prefer to feed on aphids. Bigeyed bugs may play a major role in suppressing pest populations in several crops, particularly seed alfalfa and potatoes, if unnecessary applications of insecticides are avoided.



Bigeyed bug adult



Bigeyed bug nymph feeding on aphid prey



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