

Stink bug high risk season starts again

People are being encouraged to keep an eye out for the Brown Marmorated Stink Bug (BMSB) now that the high-risk season has begun. BMSB is not currently established in New Zealand.

‘We are asking everyone to look out for this stinky pest as early detection is vital,’ says Dr Ed Massey, Chair of the BMSB Council.

‘That means spreading the word so that all New Zealanders know what to look for and what to do if they see a BMSB, especially when opening overseas packages and when unpacking after an overseas holiday.’

‘If you think you’ve seen this stink bug, catch it, snap it and report it by calling the Biosecurity New Zealand hotline on 0800 80 99 66.’

Although BMSB is a major concern to primary industry groups because it can destroy fruit and vegetable crops, it is also a significant public nuisance that will readily invade and infest people’s homes and outdoor spaces in large numbers, making it one of the top most unwanted pests that every New Zealander will want to keep out of our country.

For the high-risk season, Biosecurity New Zealand has strengthened pre-shipment requirements when importing vehicles, machinery, parts and sea containers from 33 high-risk countries.

‘The BMSB Council believes these measures will help to reduce the likelihood of BMSB crossing our borders through these higher risk pathways,’ adds Ed.

The Council is a group of industry organisations that partner with Biosecurity New Zealand – through the Government Industry Agreement for Biosecurity Readiness and Response – to improve New Zealand’s readiness for this high priority pest.

Work is also ongoing via the Council on the Samurai Wasp, a poppy seed-sized natural enemy of BMSB which lays its eggs into the stink bug eggs preventing them from hatching.

In August 2018, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) granted pre-emptive approval - with controls - to release this natural enemy following a BMSB incursion.

‘The Council has a complex programme underway to make sure a ready supply of wasps is available and we are confident that it could be a key tool to fight these unwanted stink bugs.’

‘Worldwide, there are no facilities selling the wasps commercially and while several offshore labs have wasp colonies, they are primarily for research purposes. As a result, the BMSB Council is exploring options for sourcing the wasp such as rearing them offshore with the ability to ship to New Zealand or rearing them onshore under containment.’

More information, including video and imagery is available on the [Biosecurity New Zealand website](#).

Images attached:

BMSB. No credit required.

For further information contact:

Edwin Massey (PhD)

Biosecurity and Emergency Response Manager
New Zealand Winegrowers

M: +64 21 1924924

How to identify BMSB

There are currently other species of stink bugs found in New Zealand that could be confused with BMSB. Key distinguishing features of the adult BMSB are:

- It is about the size of a 10c coin and 14-17mm long
- Look for black and white banding on the antennae and alternate black and white markings on the abdomen.