

## Box Elder Bugs

We have started to receive some calls regarding a red beetle like insect infecting maple trees. These are Box Elder Bugs. (see attached photo)

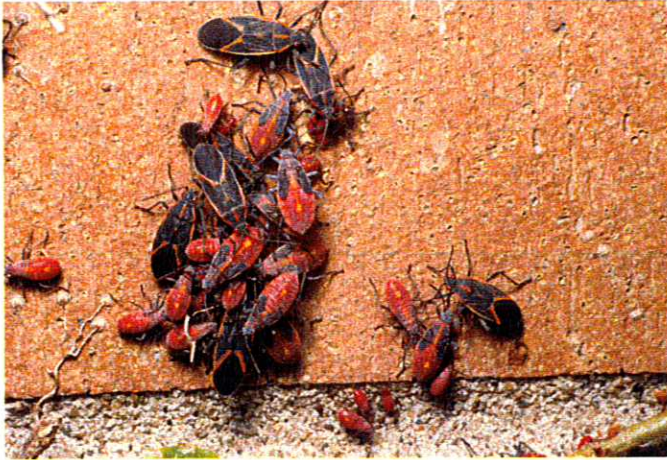


Photo: Box Elder Bugs (*Boisea trivittatus*)

### Identification

Adult Box Elder bugs are about 1/2-inch long, black with orange or red markings, including three stripes on the prothorax, the area right behind the head. Their wings lay flat over their bodies, overlapping each other to form an 'X'.

### Harmful?

NO. Box Elder Bugs generally go unnoticed during the summer months, but they cause concern in the autumn when they gather in considerable numbers on the warm outside walls of homes and trees looking for a suitable place to over winter. If they do gain entry into homes/buildings, they will NOT breed indoors, so there is no danger of starting an "infestation". **They can not bite** and will not harm people or pets. They are simply more of an annoyance. They tend to show up in the greatest numbers after a hot, dry summer.

### Where are they coming from?

Box Elder Bugs feed on Manitoba Maples trees (*Acer neugudo*) and occasionally on Silver Maples (*Acer saccharinum*). They overwinter as adults in tree cavities and emerge in Spring to breed and lay eggs. They complete 2 full life cycles each summer and are therefore most abundant and noticeable in the Fall. There is no noticeable feeding injury to these trees.

### Control

The City of Vaughan does not utilize insecticides and does not spray for Box Elder Bugs. They are simply an annoyance and will disperse on their own over a few weeks. The bugs can be reduced by applying a soap and water spray directly onto the insects or spraying with a high pressure hose. Trees will not be removed as the insects are only an annoyance for a couple weeks in the autumn.