

Bug of the Month

by Jim Revell / August 2016

Is it a Two-spotted Stink Bug (good guy) . . . or a Two-spotted Stink Bug (bad guy)?

In identifying insects, we often, if not most often, use common names. At our July BAMGA meeting, one of the insects I had the opportunity to share about was a Stink Bug – the *Cosmopepla lintneriana*, known as the Twice-stabbed Stink Bug or Two-spotted Stink Bug, and also called the Wee Harlequin Bug – that was attacking Donna Kalinski’s Snapdragons and Anise flowers. This particular Stink Bug reminded me, once again, how common names can be confusing.

Herein lies the issue. In speaking about the *C.lintneriana* (a “bad” bug), I used the common name of Two-spotted Stink Bug – not wrong, but it could be confused with the *Perillus bioculatus*, also known as the Two-spotted Stink Bug, a “good” bug.



TWO-SPOTTED STINK BUG
“bad” bug

Class: Insecta (Insects)
Order: Hemiptera
Family: Pentatomidae
Genus: *Cosmopepla*
Species: *lintneriana*



TWO-SPOTTED STINK BUG
“good” bug

Class: Insecta (Insects)
Order: Hemiptera
Family: Pentatomidae
Genus: *Perillus*
Species: *bioculatus*

The two insects share a common name but are very different:

Cosmopepla lintneriana

Size: 4-7mm (25mm=1 inch)
ID: Body Black; red-to-yellow band across Pronotum; short red stripe along midline; two red marginal spots which give the Bug its common name
Range: Canada to GA to Mexico
Season: March-October
Food: Wide variety of plants

Perillus bioculatus

Size: 8.5-11.5mm
ID: Bold pattern, color varies, two spots and keyhole markings
Range: Southern Canada through US to Mexico; originally a western spread species that followed its primary prey
Season: Follows Colorado Potato Beetle life cycle
Food: Primary prey, Colorado Potato Beetle

As you can see, both bugs are in the same Order (True Bugs) and same Family (Stink Bugs) but in different Species. Correct identification of the Species is important when recommending a control.

Just a note to add to the confusion - - there is also a Lady Beetle with the common name of Twice-stabbed! *It's fun and challenging to identify insects, particularly the “good” guys vs. “bad” guys – don't you agree?!!*

Photo References:

C.lintneriana: bugguide.net/node/view/635060; Camden County, NJ, 2012; photo by Yurika Alexander

P.bioculatus: bugguide.net/node/view/455430/bgimage: Greensboro, NC, 9/16/2010; photo by O.S. Henry

Research References / Resources:

http://aggie-horticulture.tamu.edu/galveston/beneficials/beneficial-16_twicestabbed_ladybug.htm

www4.ncsu.edu/~dorr/Insects/Predators/Perillus_bioculatus/perillus_bioculatus.html#

<http://bugguide.net/node/view/13491?printable=1>

<http://bugguide.net/node/view/6433>

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Read more of his articles on the "Jims Bugs" page @ www.BedfordMasterGardeners.org