

[www.livingwithbugs.com/boxeld\\_3.html](http://www.livingwithbugs.com/boxeld_3.html)

## Boxelder Bug Control - Stop bugs from getting into walls and attics -

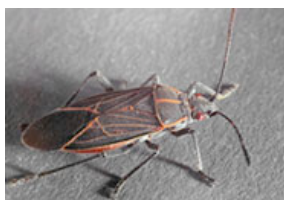
**Summary:** Boxelder bug control is a two step process. First, seal any openings that can be used by the bugs to get inside then treat exterior surfaces with a low toxicity insecticide.

*Jack DeAngelis, PhD OSU Ext. Entomologist (ret.)*

### What to do when boxelder bugs invade

First, exclude boxelder bugs (see [What are Boxelder Bugs?](#)) from entering the house by repairing screens and caulking cracks around windows and doors. Bugs that do get in will take up winter residence in wall voids and the attic. *They will not cause any structural damage* but will become a nuisance throughout the winter. If you are unable to seal exterior cracks you may need to treat wall voids and the attic with **insecticidal dust** (see **Related Articles** below).

Second, treat boxelder bugs as they congregate on house siding using one of the three ways outlined below. Bear in mind that bugs become less affected by insecticides later in the fall as their metabolism slows down for winter. Therefore *treat as soon as migrating bugs start arriving in early fall*.



**Boxelder bug** (about 1/2 inch long). Note the red markings around the dark grey wings. Insecticide treatments

**Insecticidal soap** can be used to safely treat bugs that congregate on house siding in the fall. You'll probably need to treat every day or two while new bugs continue arriving since soap has little or no residual activity. Spray bugs directly with a 1-2% soap solution using a backpack sprayer (see [Using Insecticidal Soap](#)).

The most aggressive approach is to apply a *light* spray of a **pyrethroid insecticide** to the siding and eaves, wherever boxelder bugs congregate. It is not necessary to treat the bugs directly. Pyrethroid insecticides will give longer residual activity but are considerably more toxic and hazardous to apply.

Several insecticides are available for this application including **cypermethrin** and **permethrin** (see [Pest Control Suppliers](#)) but be sure to check the labels for appropriate usage. You'll need a backpack sprayer, safety equipment and a ladder. Treating the maple trees on which boxelder bugs develop has *not been effective* because these insects are strong fliers and may be migrating from trees some distance away.

### Vacuum bugs off siding

Another method is to use a large capacity wet/dry type vacuum cleaner to suck up bugs that are accessible. Be sure to empty the canister frequently because killed bugs will begin to smell fairly quickly. This will need to be done every day or two as long as the bugs are migrating in your area.

There is much more information at the University of Minnesota Extension site [www.extension.umn.edu/distribution/horticulture/dg0998.html](http://www.extension.umn.edu/distribution/horticulture/dg0998.html)

Read all label directions carefully before buying insecticides & again before applying them. Information on label is the final authority and must be followed exactly.