

Stinkbugs, our invasive visitor!

by Pete Goodman

These warm fall days are glorious. Not too hot and not too cool. They allow for comfortable raking of the already fallen leaves and the copious amounts of acorns. Clothes hung out to dry are dry in record time. The only negative is the stink bugs.

They are everywhere. Hanging clothes out to dry isn't really possible. The stink bugs climb into the pockets and up the sleeves. They line home entry doors and collect on the screens of open windows. They are small enough to find even the tiniest crack or opening and gain entrance into your home, your castle, your protected space. They recline on your pillow.

I have observed otherwise sane and nearly normal people come completely unglued when confronted with stink bugs inside their home. A rather burly and manly man was reduced to a blithering idiot when describing the stink bug invasion of his truck. They are fabulously annoying in the way that they invade our private space. So what is the deal? What are these stink bugs and where do they come from?

According to my research, which was limited to a rather quick internet search, the offending stink bug is one of a whole class of stink bugs. My particular infestation is the brown marmorated stink bug. This particular bug is a true insect, having six legs. It is a non-native that was introduced into eastern Pennsylvania some time prior to 1998, where it was first collected in Allentown. It has now been reported in 23 states from Maine to Florida and west to California and Oregon. This bug is native to China, Japan, Korea and Taiwan. It has become a serious pest of fruits, vegetables and farm crops in the Mid-Atlantic region and probably will affect other parts of the country as well. To me, and many of you, it is a nuisance pest due to it being attracted to our homes on warm fall days in search of protected overwintering sites. And joy of joys, the little devils can reappear during warmer sunny periods throughout the winter and then again as it emerges in the spring.

You probably know why they are called stink bugs. When you squish them they stink. You can handle them and not get smelly. I generally pick them up and pitch them out the door without getting odorized. The good news is that they are not known to cause harm to humans. Annoying yes - especially when noisily flying about my head as I try to concentrate on balancing my checkbook - but harmful, no. Also good news is that they will not reproduce inside structures or cause damage. So how do we deal with this pest? The best method is to keep them out of your house by mechanical methods. That means tighten up your house. Get out the caulking gun, get some good quality silicone or silicone-latex caulk and fill in all those little gaps where the critters can get in. Damaged screens, windows and doors should be replaced. If we prevent them from getting in, we don't have to deal with them inside. Good luck with that. Once they are inside collecting and shuttling them out again works for me. Some find a vacuum cleaner to be effective at the collection process. However the vacuum may take on the smell of stink bugs after a while. The use of insecticides is not recommended. Many can be dangerous, and if numbers of stink bugs are left dead, other more damaging bugs can be attracted and feed on the bodies.

Speaking of feeding, what eats these bugs anyway? Well that is a problem. Not much. I thought I saw a Carolina Wren

eat one yesterday, and Fred told me that grackles eat them. That is the problem with invasive anything - they have no natural predators. It might just come down to you and me and a hungry grackle or wren. Not a real good option for control.

Thank you to the following web page for the valuable information contained in this article:

<http://ento.psu.edu/extension/factsheets/brown-marmorated-stink-bug>



Adult female Brown Marmorated Stink Bug, photo courtesy of Rutgers NJ Agricultural Experiment Station website, <http://njaes.rutgers.edu/images/photos/stinkbug/adult-female-full.jpg>



Tracks and Trails



Want a cure for the cabin fever sets in at the end of February-beginning of March each year? Ever wonder what critter made the tracks across your deck after a fresh snowfall? The Open Land Conservancy has the solution! Join us for our annual "Tracks and Trails" program, led by Jack Chidester, in the Cedar Hollow Preserve. He will teach you how to identify the tracks of the common animals in our area. Many mounted specimens, plaster print molds, skulls, skins, feathers and bones will be on display. He will then lead a nature walk through the preserve, hopefully to find some of the "tracks and trails" we just learned.

All are welcome, especially children, to this rain or shine or hopefully snow event. Please check

www.openlandconservancy.org

for details: exact date, times, and location, soon.



Volunteers: the Life Blood of Our Organization!

by Tim Magee

Volunteers are essential to improving the character and accessibility of the Open Land Conservancy preserves. Whether it is the Sisyphean task of fighting the invasive plants, building trails and bridges to reach all parts of the property or picking up trash, the volunteers hold the key to the success of the OLC goal of providing a natural setting for the public to enjoy.

In the last 12 months the Cedar Hollow preserve has had a number of successful volunteer efforts. We are fortunate that there is a loyal group of individuals that give of their time and energy every year to improve the preserves. This year was no different. In November our seasoned volunteers plus a group of boy scouts attacked the Oriental Bittersweet, an invasive vine and a most worthy foe. Fighting the Oriental Bittersweet reminds me of Hercules fighting the Hydra. For every Hydra head that Hercules cut off, two heads emerged. I am not saying that for every vine we cut off two vines appeared, though it sometimes felt that way. Although we have not vanquished the Bittersweet in Cedar Hollow Preserve, we have stopped its spread and have reduced its impact on the native vegetation.

Several construction projects greatly improved the accessibility to Cedar Hollow Preserve. A boy scout's Eagle Badge Project was to build a bridge across the Cedar Hollow Run. The Boy Scout worked through a number design modifications, coordinated the materials and organized the labor. Incredibly the bridge was completed within a few days of his 18th birthday, which is the dead line for an Eagle scout project. This bridge is attractive, sturdy and functional. The purpose of the bridge is to connect the trails on the east and west side of the stream. Now there is one lovely trail that does a circle instead of two trails where you had to back track.

Another construction project was accomplished by a team of Americorps workers who volunteered for heavy labor. The goal of the day was to greatly improve the accessibility of the trail along Valley Creek by making rail road tie bridges over a series of small wet weather streams. With a wonderful combination of enthusiasm and strong backs the Americorps efforts has made the trail useable year round.

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Volunteers *(continued)*

By far the most exciting group of Cedar Hollow volunteers this year was my son's Cub Scout den from Pack 112. What they lacked in concentration they made up for in pure energy. Our mission was to pick up trash along the banks of Valley Creek, but that was too easy for these boys. They wanted all the trash they could see, regardless if the water was over their boots. At the end of the day we had loads of trash and a den of wet but happy Cub Scouts.

Photo captions:

- 1 & 2 Cedar Hollow Preserve Manager Tim Magee working with Americorps members to control erosion and improve the trail network.
3. Airdrie Forest Preserve Manager, Tim Lander with nationwide high school students from the Student Conservation Association.
4. Our energetic "Tidy up Tredyffrin" team with their haul of trash from the length of Church Road passing through Cedar Hollow Preserve.
5. & 7. Eagle Scout Jack Fields, his crew from Devon Scout Troup 50 and the bridge they built across the sparkling Cedar Hollow Run at the confluence with Valley Creek.
6. Eagle Scout Adam Rodriguez and George Lorimer Preserve Manager, Art Blumenthal with one of the two new visitor information kiosks adjacent to preserve parking lots.



Thank you for your support!
The Open Land Conservancy is always looking for new members...spread the word to your friends and neighbors:
[www. openlandconservancy.org](http://www.openlandconservancy.org)
Memberships: Individual \$25,
Family \$40

www. openlandconservancy.org

Vine Days -Volunteer Opportunity!

OLC will once again be holding its series of winter "Vine Days" to continue our successful campaign against the invasive vegetation that limits development of the tree canopy layer in our nature preserves.

This is a great opportunity for volunteers to make a visible and lasting impact on the preserves. We work for three to four hours on one Saturday morning each month, beginning at 9am. This season's schedule is as follows:

Date	Preserve	Meeting Location
December 4th	Diamond Rock	Chautauqua Circle
January 8th	George Lorimer	N Valley Road parking lot
February 5th	Cedar Hollow	Church Road parking lot
March 5th	Cool Valley	Cool Valley Road entrance
April 2nd		<i>To Be Determined</i>

Volunteers get out in the fresh air, take a mid-morning hot chocolate break and enjoy the companionship of like-minded neighbors. All that's needed are protective clothing, gloves and, if you have them, tools such as loppers, pruners and hand saws to supplement OLC's supply.

We hope you can join us!

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