



Bug Alert Cyprus



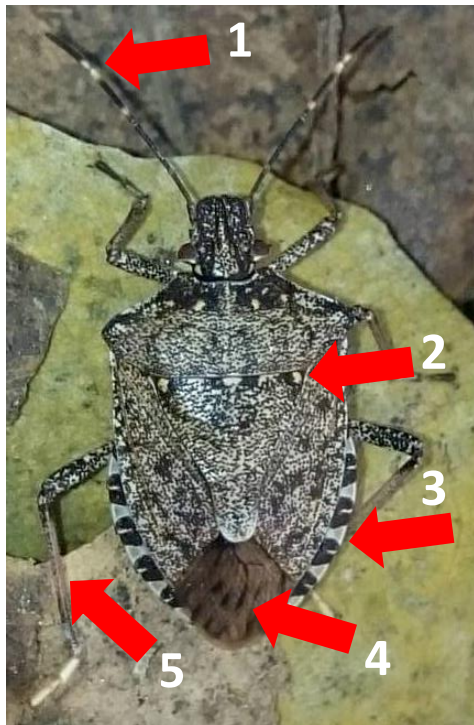
You might have heard about the rapid spread of the invasive alien **brown marmorated stink bug** (BMSB) (*Halyomorpha halys*). This species is native to East Asia but has invaded many countries across continental Europe, including Greece and Turkey. BMSB



causes severe damage to a wide range of cultivated plants, such as fruit (citrus, apple, pear, peach, hazelnut), vegetable (tomato, green pepper, beans) and other crops. Moreover, it can be a nuisance to humans, especially in autumn when the bugs move into buildings in high numbers to take shelter for winter.

Bug Alert Cyprus aims to raise awareness on the threats BMSB poses to the economy and human well-being and provides information that can help citizens identify the bug and report its occurrence.

What does BMSB look like?



1. The **antennae** are **black and white** ('zebra') striped.
2. **Five yellowish spots**, which may be more or less pronounced.
3. The **margin of the body** is **black and white**, with the white parts triangular in shape.
4. The thin-skinned, transparent part of the **wings** (membrane) has **black lines**.
5. The **legs** have a clear **white band**

**1.5 cm in size, excellent climber
with a loud buzz!**

Where to look for BMSB?

The bug is expected to appear first **in busy locations** such as big towns, in the vicinity of ports, airports, or popular tourist sites. BMSBs are excellent ‘hitchhikers’ and ‘stowaways’, which means that they can

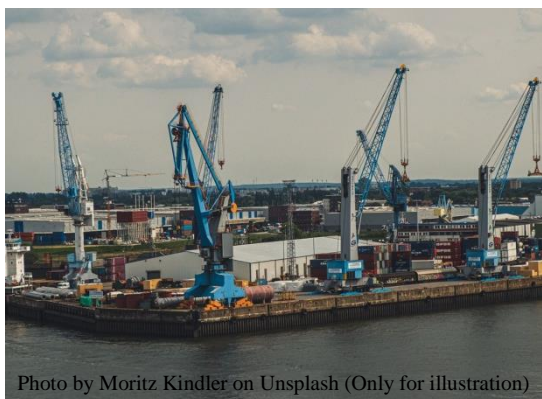


Photo by Moritz Kindler on Unsplash (Only for illustration)

actively find shelter within any type of goods and cargo.

The bug is not expected to reach Cyprus by active dispersal from neighbouring regions but it can be introduced passively and accidentally by humans through international trade and transport of goods.

Once BMSB is introduced, it can spread quickly on its own and invade cultivated plants (fruits, vegetables, ornamentals) during their growing period and buildings during the colder months.

Keep an eye on any bugs that look ‘suspicious’!

Is BMSB harmful?

It is and it isn’t. If caught at an early stage of introduction it can be eradicated but once it is established in an area, it can become a severe pest of many crops causing damage to the fruits by feeding on them. Infested fruits can be sold for a lower price but may become unmarketable. Massive infestations may result in increased pesticide applications that can threaten the natural environment, including beneficial species such as pollinators.



Fortunately, although BMSB is a nuisance pest, it does not pose a direct risk to human health as it only feeds on plant material.

What do I do if I find a ‘suspicious looking bug’?

Please keep an eye on ‘big and brown bugs’ and report any observations to the following email address:

bugalertcyprus@gmail.com

Important!



When sending a message, please provide us with the following information:

- **Place** of observation (name of the location, preferably with GPS coordinates)
- **Date** of observation
- **Name** of the recorder
- **Photo attachments of the bug(s)**

Based on the photo a team of experts will be able to verify your record and send you feedback!

Your contribution is crucial and we would like to thank you in advance for participating in this citizen science initiative. Together we can detect and monitor the dispersal of this invasive alien insect in Europe!



Don't worry, this is not very usual. It is our Principal Investigator while handling a very attractive BMSB aggregation pheromone trap...

Bug Alert Cyprus and the Principal Investigator, Dr Gábor Vétek, associate professor at the Szent István University was funded by COST action 17122 Alien CSI.