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New Pest Alert and Update; Introduced Exotic Seed-Bugs are New and Increasing Nuisance Problems in Areas of Western Washington - *Rhyparochromis vulgaris* and *Raglius alboacuminatus*

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Background / Situation Update

Since the discovery of an introduced, exotic seed-bug (Figure 1) by a homeowner in Orting (Pierce Co.) in 2001, populations of this species have steadily spread and increased. Large numbers have been reported from areas from King County south to Lewis County in the fall and spring.

Figure 2. Raglius Seed-bug, *Raglius alboacuminatus*



In 2005, a second introduced exotic seed-bug species (Figure 2) was found in Western Washington. This slightly smaller, similar version of the first, is also being reported from King County as well as in areas north to Whatcom County.

Large numbers of the seed-bugs may occur in and around homes and other buildings in the fall as they seek out protected places for over-wintering, and again in the spring as they leave shelter to disperse.

Both species are native to continental Europe, where they are a periodic nuisance but not considered damaging plant pests. The smaller of the two species (Raglius seed-bug) has also been found in California and Utah, where

alarmingly high initial populations have declined in subsequent years.

Here, the Orting homeowner who first reported the *Rhyparochromis* seed-bug problem in the fall of 2001 has noticed a significant decline of the bugs in her area in the last two years.

Often, the first place homeowners notice the presence of the seed-bugs is around home foundations and on exterior walls (Figure 3). The small, dark bugs are very rapid runners, often mistaken for small beetles, and can fly. Unlike many native true bugs, they don't have a strong odor. If control of nuisance populations is necessary, contact WSU Extension Service for recommendations.

(*Rhyparochromis* = Rye-pair-o-chrome-iss, *Raglius* = Rag-lee-us)

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Figure 1. Rhyparochromis Seed-bug, *Rhyparochromis vulgaris*



Figure 3. Rhyparochromis Seed-bugs on Home Foundation.

