

Name _____



The Life Cycle of a Stink Bug

Stink bugs, with their shield-shaped bodies and unique behaviors, have a fascinating life cycle. From tiny eggs to fully grown adults, stink bugs go through several stages of development, each crucial to their survival.

Egg Stage

The life of a stink bug begins as an egg. Female stink bugs lay their eggs in clusters on the undersides of leaves. Each cluster can contain 20 to 30 small, oval-shaped eggs, which are typically light green or pale yellow. The eggs stay hidden from predators, giving them a better chance to hatch safely. Depending on the temperature and environment, the eggs hatch in 4 to 7 days.

Nymph Stage

Once the eggs hatch, tiny creatures called nymphs emerge. Nymphs are the young stage of stink bugs and look similar to adults, but they lack wings and are smaller. During this stage, nymphs shed their skin multiple times in a process called molting. Each molt allows them to grow larger and develop more features. Nymphs feed on plant juices, which they suck from leaves, stems, and fruits. This stage can last up to six weeks.

Adult Stage

After completing their molts, nymphs transform into fully grown adults. Adult stink bugs are larger, with fully developed wings and hard exoskeletons. Their color may range from green to brown, depending on the species. As adults, stink bugs are capable of flying and begin searching for mates to start the life cycle again. Adult stink bugs can live several months, depending on the environment and food availability.

Seasonal Cycle

Stink bugs are most active during warmer months when food is plentiful. During colder months, they enter a hibernation-like state called diapause. In this state, they slow down their activity and seek shelter in safe places like tree bark or human homes. When spring arrives, they emerge to continue their life cycle.

The stink bug's ability to adapt to its surroundings ensures its survival. Each stage of its life is carefully timed to make the most of available resources, helping the species thrive in diverse environments.