

Stink bug damage to corn



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Stink bugs are common in Michigan crops. Plant-feeding species inject salivary enzymes into plants and suck up plant juices. In young corn (V4-V5 stage), this feeding creates a characteristic pattern of circular holes with yellow margins, which are very apparent as the whorl unrolls (left and below). In severe cases, plants may be twisted and deformed (right), or the growing point may even die.



Fields or parts of fields that were weedy, then sprayed – as in these pictures – are at risk for injury, as hungry stink bugs move off dying weeds into the corn.

Stink bugs in corn are difficult to manage by scouting and using a threshold, since the damage appears several weeks after feeding. However, early planting and good weed control prior to planting are two ways to reduce stink bug damage.



NOTE – the damage in these pictures was not caused by brown marmorated stink bug (BMSB), discovered in Michigan in fall 2010. There are many pest stink bug species in the state. It will be 2-3 years before BMSB numbers increase to problem levels in field crops.