



## Weed Bug, *Arhyssus crassus* Harris (Rhopalidae)

The weed bug is a house pest of considerable importance throughout California, particularly in new subdivisions and in areas adjacent to uncultivated fields, ditch banks, or levees. As much as a liter of these bugs has been collected in some houses. The adults are uniformly brown, and about 9 mm long. A favored host is the yellow star thistle, *Centaurea solstitialis*, but the insects occur on many other plants. They migrate into houses in large numbers when their native habitats are disturbed or when the weeds they normally infest begin to dry in summer. They are attracted to light-colored buildings more than to those of darker colors, and tend to crawl through any openings that they find under windows or doors. They stain draperies and rugs with their excrement, which is practically impossible to remove by the usual cleaning operations. The bugs themselves have an objectionable odor.

### ***Control of Weed Bugs***

There is no control measure that is effective after the bugs have moved into populated areas and become household pests. Even when they are sprayed before entering a house, they are still able to go inside, and then die. Their control in the form of disking or spraying, needs to be applied in the originally infested grasslands. Carbaryl (Sevin®) is an effective insecticide (R. N. Hawthorne, correspondence).

From URBAN ENTOMOLOGY by Walter Ebeling

FSPC notes: Weed bugs are most common both in early spring and late summer. It appears they move towards and into houses in late summer in order to over-winter. Then in late winter they start to awaken and emerge. It is sometimes quite surprising to see so many bugs in a house so early in the year.

They are typically very difficult to control. I suggest doing what you can for the customer, and explaining, if you can, that they fly in from the fields and are simply tough to stop.

Consider dusting wall voids when you see them in late winter or early spring.