

## Red and Black, Friends of Jack and Jill



Now is the time you may be seeing numerous red and black colored insects outdoors, crawling up the sides of your home and in spots in your landscape. These are harmless, *helpful* insects called *Jadera haematoloma*, sometimes called the “Red shouldered bug” or “Soapberry bug.” It is an odorless insect that will not harm you or your plants.

If you have a Chinaberry tree or a Golden Rain tree which are both in the Soapberry family of plants in your area, then these insects are truly helping you out. They consume the sap, seeds, leaves and stems of these trees, saving you from thousands of baby sprouting trees under the adult tree, or as it turns out in my yard, EVERYWHERE! Even in pots where all other plant material has died, the baby Rain trees thrive. The papery seed pod can float lightly on the breeze far and wide. I can spot other Rain trees nearby as a result of them landing in places they seem to like just fine.



Although they are present year round, the peak months you may see these winged insects are March, April and May. They are mostly black in color, with red areas of the abdomen, eyes and upper body. They are not too large, ranging 1/3 to 1/2 inches long. The nymphs are almost red all over, with black here and there. They are common in the southern United States.

No control is required, but they do like to hide in places such as under boards, rocks, leaves and general debris near houses, and they can be easily brushed away. Raking up the tree seed pods can help control populations.



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