The bad news, CFAES experts say, is that Ohio’s recent colder-than-normal winter probably didn’t faze them. When the winds blew, snow flew, and temperatures fell below zero, they were mostly snug in your attic or walls, sheltered from the storms. The winter weather is why they sneaked in to begin with.

The good news is, with warm weather here, they’re leaving your house to return outdoors, or have already left, and you can take steps to keep them from getting back in.

“Summer is a good time to bug-proof your home,” said Joe Boggs, entomologist and educator with OSU Extension.

For starters, he said, “I always tell people to go up in their attic with the lights off, so they can look around and see if any light is coming through.”

Seeing light coming in where it shouldn’t means there’s a gap, an entry point into your home. Come fall, stink bugs and lady beetles could use that gap to get in. So could western conifer seed bugs and boxelder bugs, among others.

Common places for gaps are window frames, door jambs, soffits, and unscreened attic vents. Soffits themselves might have small, bug-proof vent holes in them that let in light, and that’s OK, Boggs said, but if you see light streaming in where the soffits meet the wall, “that’s a problem.” Attic vents let light through, too, but need to be screened against bugs.

“I also tell people to consider walking around the outside of their home and taking a look,” Boggs said. “Even on a 10-year-old home, the caulking can start pulling away from the windows and doors.”

The solution, he said, is to get out your caulk gun and fill in the gaps. It’s less than fun. But it does the trick.

“Who doesn’t love caulking?” he asked with a laugh.

What’s their story?
In Ohio and much of the United States, brown marmorated stink bugs and multicolored Asian lady beetles are common fall home invaders. They seek safe, secure places for spending the winter that are neither too cold nor too hot—an unheated attic, for instance. There, they chillax, conserving stored fat, in groups of dozens or hundreds. And sometimes, yes, random ones might stumble into your living room.

Neither species is native to Ohio or North America; both are invasive species from Asia. Neither is venomous. But both can emit a stink, can stain your carpet or wall if crushed, and often are a nuisance with their pop-in visits.

Outside in summer, brown marmorated stink bugs are crop pests, while multicolored Asian lady beetles eat crop pests, specifically aphids.

Learn more at go.osu.edu/FallBugs and go.osu.edu/MALB.
While the majority of Ohioans have access to broadband internet, 1 million others lack access to fast, reliable services in their homes, said an analyst with the C. William Swank Program in Rural-Urban Policy at Ohio State.

A recent report released by Swank researchers says that there is a strong economic benefit for Ohio to invest in expanding broadband coverage to unserved areas.

Broadband internet services are those that meet the Federal Communications Commission’s minimum speeds of 25 megabits per second for downloading and 3 megabits per second for uploading. As it now stands, the worst internet speeds are in rural areas in 29 states, including Ohio, according to a 2016 Federal Communications Commission report.

“Significant economic benefits are produced when households are able to access a broader range of products and services at lower prices,” Partridge wrote. “Based on economists’ estimates of the average consumer benefit of broadband access between $1,500 to $2,200 per year, we conservatively estimate that reaching full broadband coverage today would generate between $1 billion and $2 billion in economic benefits over the next 15 years.”

In February 2018, the federal government allocated $50 billion to rural infrastructure that will allow states, including Ohio, to spend as much as 100 percent of that funding on improving rural broadband access, according to a White House news release.

The Swank report said that bridging the digital divide and extending access to unserved areas of Ohio will likely require a focused state effort, including:

- establishing a state broadband office to coordinate the many state agencies that contribute to broadband utilization and expansion
- adopting a state “dig once” policy to leverage nonbroadband infrastructure projects and reduce the costs of broadband expansion
- strengthening public-private partnerships so public infrastructure can be effectively used to expand broadband access without creating anti-competitive conditions
- establishing a broadband investment fund to finance infrastructure required to reach unserved populations
- promoting the development of local government policies that facilitate last-mile broadband provision

The 2017 analysis Connecting the Dots of Ohio’s Broadband Policy is available to download for free at go.osu.edu/ConnectingTheDots.

Rural access to broadband would generate $1B to $2B over 15 years

“This unserved population largely lives in less populated rural regions of the state where it is prohibitively expensive for internet service providers to extend service,” said Mark Partridge, Swank program chair and professor in CFAES’ Department of Agricultural, Environmental, and Development Economics.
When people eat at home, there’s typically not much left on their plates. That means there’s likely less going to landfills, according to a new study from CFAES.

said Brian Roe, the study’s lead author and a professor in CFAES’ Department of Agricultural, Environmental, and Development Economics.

Prior research typically has focused on plate waste in settings such as school cafeterias and buffets, and it has found much greater waste—from about 7 percent at an all-you-can-eat pizza buffet to 18 percent of French fries at an all-you-can-eat university dining hall.

The new study, published in the journal PLOS ONE, is the first of its kind to follow adult eaters through their normal day-to-day eating patterns, said Roe, who leads the Ohio State Food Waste Collaborative.

“This study allows us to go into the daily eating habits of adults and suggests that when people are choosing their own food, there’s not a lot left on their plate,” he said.

The researchers tracked food waste through pictures the 50 study participants took on smartphones before and after meals. The study ran for about a week and included all meals eaten at home or away from home.

As much as 25 to 40 percent of food is wasted overall in the United States, and better understanding the when, why, and how is a key step in reducing that waste, Roe said.

Based on this study, it’s probably more important to focus on meal-planning and using up foods (and leftovers) before they spoil than on what is left on the plate at home, Roe said.

“Better meal-planning is a good place to start,” Roe said. “Coming up with a recipe for the leftovers that your family and your kids will actually eat is the next step.”

The National Institutes of Health and the U.S. Department of Agriculture supported this study.
What’s flowering now?

What’s in bloom in your town? Use CFAES’ online Phenology Calendar to find out. Go to oardc.ohio-state.edu/gdd, enter your ZIP code, and see a daily listing of the stages of bloom of trees and shrubs around you. Entries might say, “Apple serviceberry, first bloom,” for example, or “Koreanspice viburnum, full bloom.” There’s also an option to see the whole season.

CFAES scientists base the calendar on growing degree days (GDD), essentially a measure of how warm (or not) the season has been. The calendar shows you the current GDD in your neighborhood, and the bloom stages happening at that level.

It shows you, too, the development stages of certain pests and weeds, such as “Egg hatch, European pine sawfly” and “First seedling emergence, smooth crabgrass.” That’s helpful information if you grow plants for fun or as a business. It tells you when the pest or weed is actually present and vulnerable. You can apply a pesticide, if needed, only at the best possible time, which keeps your costs down, improves effectiveness, and also protects the environment.

C.O.R.N. Newsletter informs

With so many challenges in farming, free advice is often welcome. The C.O.R.N. Newsletter (Crop Observation and Recommendation Network) is just that.

The online newsletter provides a summary of crop observations, related information, and recommendations for Ohio crop producers and industry. The newsletter—produced by OSU Extension’s Agronomic Crops Team—details upcoming agriculture workshops and other events, and provides valuable insights into crop and weather developments.

Read the newsletter at agcrops.osu.edu/newsletter/corn-newsletter.

Show your support for Ohio 4-H

The Ohio 4-H Foundation Fund (#605354) improves the quantity and quality of Ohio 4-H youth development programming under the auspices of OSU Extension. The mission of the Ohio 4-H Foundation is to raise money to enhance the Ohio 4-H program and to recognize 4-H youth and 4-H adult volunteers. For details, contact the CFAES Office of Advancement at 614-292-0473 or email the foundation at ohio4hfoundation@osu.edu.