

# MINUTE PIRATE BUGS: TINY BUGS, BIG BITE

Minute pirate bugs are true bugs, part of the order Hemiptera. Minute here is pronounced “my-newt” as in tiny or diminutive, not minute like the unit of time.

About 1/8th inch long

Jim Kalisch; UNL Entomology

Oval shaped

Black body with brown band

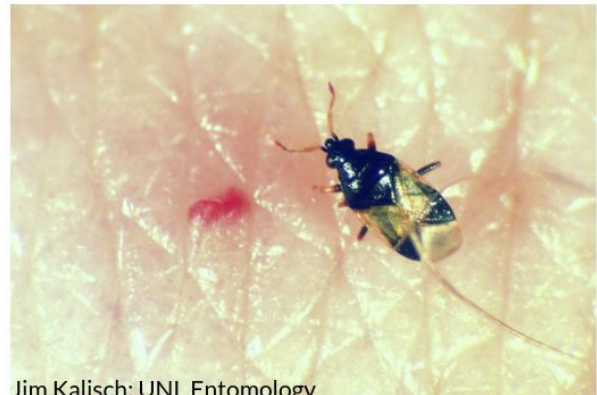


Tip of wings is a white tear-drop

They have a piercing-sucking mouth-part on the front of their head which they use to drain prey of their juices. Like the unlucky aphid above!



In the summer, pirate bugs are in fields and meadows helping to control pest insects



In the fall they may end up in areas with humans. When they land on you they will probe you with their need-like mouth

The bite can be quite painful and some people react by developing a large mosquito like bump on their skin. Unfortunately, there are no practical control methods for pirate bugs. Wearing dark, long sleeved clothing when outdoors can help minimize pirate bug attraction to you. Insect repellents (DEET, picaridin, lemon-eucalyptus oil) may also provide relief if you are outside for multiple hours. There are also reports that wearing baby oil on the skin will repel pirate bugs.