

# Help find harlequin ladybird

Harlequin ladybirds (*Harmonia axyridis*) have been detected in Auckland. MPI and industry want to know if it is present in other parts of New Zealand.

## WHY IS HARLEQUIN LADYBIRD A THREAT?

The harlequin ladybird is considered an invasive species in many countries.

It feeds on aphids, usually from willow, oak, maple and poplar trees. This has made it useful as a biological control of pests in some countries. Unfortunately, its huge appetite allows it to out-compete native ladybirds. It will also eat other ladybirds and beneficial insects if it runs out of aphids. It may also feed on pip fruit, causing blemishes on the fruit.

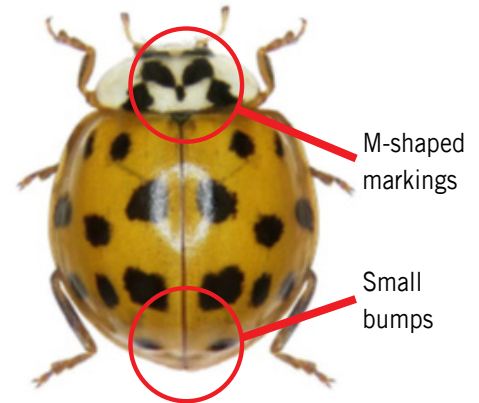
It has been known to cluster within bunches of grapes before harvest, resulting in the tainting of the juice and any wine made from the juice.

Ladybirds also aggregate during the winter in dark, concealed spaces. This can create a nuisance for home owners.

The species spreads very quickly, making it difficult to manage. It is native to Asia, but has spread through Europe, North America (Canada, USA and Mexico), throughout most of South America, UK, Egypt, Kenya and South Africa, and Russia.

## WHAT DOES THE HARLEQUIN LADYBIRD LOOK LIKE?

- » The harlequin is large by ladybird standards – 5–8 mm long and 4–6.5 mm wide.
- » It is well known for its very variable colouration and patterning, which makes it difficult to distinguish from other ladybird species.
- » It looks similar to the common spotted ladybird (*Harmonia conformis*). The harlequin ladybird usually has M-shaped markings on the pronotum (the area between the head and abdomen), although this pattern is not present with darker specimens. In contrast, the pronotum of the common spotted ladybird features a W-shaped black mark or two separate U-shaped patches.
- » The harlequin also has small bumps on the rear of its back.
- » Harlequin larvae and pupae have a spikier skin than the common spotted ladybird.



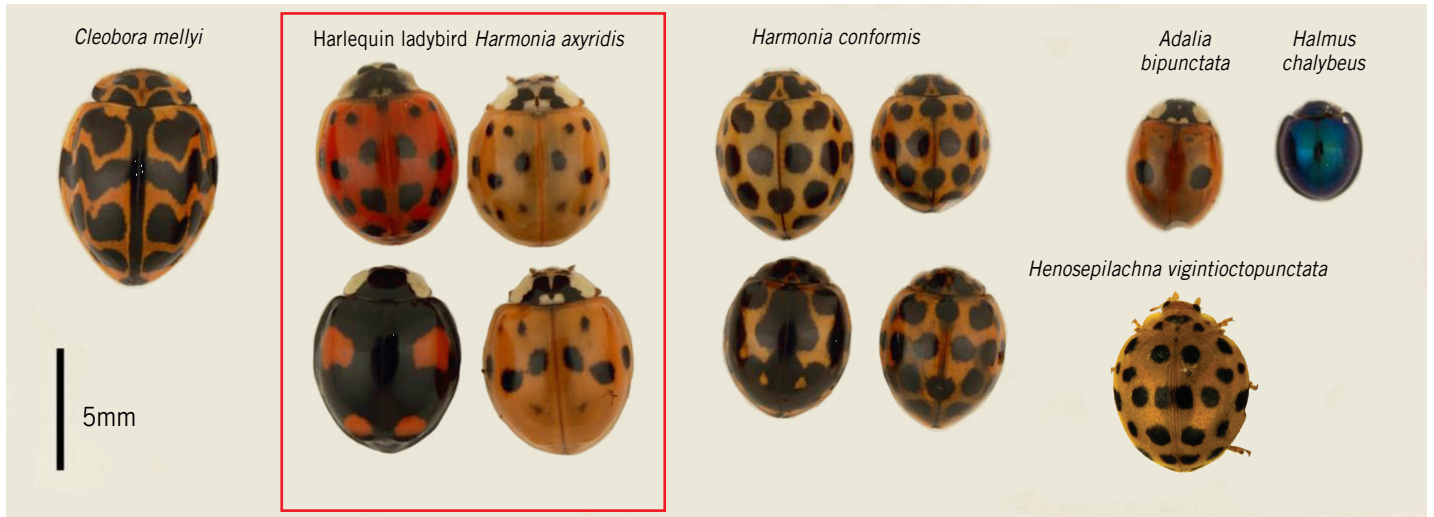
Harlequin ladybird. Note the M-shaped markings on the pronotum.



Harlequin ladybird pupa. Note the spiky appearance of the scoli.



Harlequin ladybird larva.



The harlequin ladybird (*Harmonia axyridis*) alongside other ladybird species found in New Zealand.



Harlequin ladybird has many colour/pattern variations.



The similar-looking common spotted ladybird (already present in NZ). Note the separate U-shaped marks on the pronotum.

**WHAT SHOULD I DO IF I THINK I HAVE FOUND HARLEQUIN LADYBIRDS?**

**Please collect specimen.**

**Photograph it.**

**Contact MPI's free 24-hour pest and disease hotline 0800 80 99 66.**

