

PestGazette

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Rodents, Beetles and Flies ... Oh My!

As autumn days get shorter and outdoor temperatures start to fall, little visitors may begin to invade your home. Rodents, bugs, beetles, and flies can suddenly show up inside your house by the hundreds, or even by the thousands.

Many of these pests do little or no real harm to us, our structures or our health but they can multiply to serious numbers in no time. They seem to be everywhere and in everything. They often become active during winter warm spells and usually become a serious nuisance when they try to find their way back outside in the spring.

Rodents and other urban wildlife can pose serious health risks by harboring and spreading disease such as hantavirus and plague. They often cause damage to structures by chewing or tearing holes in walls, doors or screens. They can also damage or contaminate food and clothing with their urine and droppings.

If you have problems with these unwelcome pests, contact us. We are ready to help you identify, survey for, and control them using an Integrated Pest Management approach.

Furry Little Houseguests

By this time of year, throughout most of the U.S., domestic mice, rats and other pesky critters will have already found their winter homes. Their numbers may not yet be great enough for you to have noticed them or their droppings, but that could change quickly. They have

probably already begun producing their next litters, and have found and laid down trails to the places where you keep the food and nesting materials they will need for the next several months. One day soon, you may be surprised to find a hole chewed in your cereal box, rodent droppings

on your kitchen counter, or mouse hairs on your dishes.

The house mouse is the most common pest in living and working places. They can cause damage by

gnawing, eating our food (especially cereal products or nuts), or attacking decorations such as dried floral arrangements. A house mouse has a head-plus-body length of about 2.5 to 3.5 inches, and is gray with dull white

belly fur. Adults weigh about an ounce, but they eat often and leave telltale droppings in places where they sat down to feed. Mouse droppings are long and pointed compared to the larger, blunt droppings of rats. *continued on page 2*



Call today! 000-000-0000

Furry Houseguests (continued)

Mice may look cuddly, but they breed rapidly. A house mouse can breed 35 days after it is born, and can have its first litter of up to eight pups by the time it is 60 days old. Although they usually live only about a year, if all their offspring lived and reproduced at a similar rate, one pair of house mice could produce a population of more than 500 mice in one year.

Mice can jump about a foot straight up, and can jump down more than six feet without getting hurt. An adult mouse can squeeze through a crack or hole as small as 3/8-inch across and can quickly climb straight up an eight-foot wall of brick or wood paneling in less than half a minute. Even though one mouse doesn't eat much, as their population grows, they can eat a surprising amount of food. They also damage food containers, and their droppings and urine droplets contaminate a lot more food than they eat. In a year, one mouse produces up to 18,000 droppings and deposits hundreds of micro-droplets of urine every day, containing an allergen called Mouse Urinary Protein (MUP), as it marks its trails. House mice can spread more than 20 kinds of disease organisms to humans and pets. These include various food poisoning bacteria like Salmonella, Shigella, *E. coli*; and tapeworms, mites, ticks, and rickettsial pox.

Other rodents, which may also come indoors for the winter, such as deer mice, and related species, usually are brownish with a white belly; and have larger ears and eyes that "bulge" more than the house mouse. They have similar

droppings, eat similar foods and have similar biology and indoor nesting habits. Deer mice and their relatives can carry and spread other disease organisms like hantavirus and plague.

If you see mice, or other rodents, or

their signs such as droppings in your house or business, don't panic. Don't go buy traps and poison baits and scatter them around helter skelter. The wisest thing to do is to call a Pest Management Professional. We can help determine what rodent(s) you may have, where they are, and the extent of any problem. We can help you plan and carry out an effective rodent control, exclusion and prevention program that will protect you, your family or customers, and your property.

Mice may interrupt internet access and even start fires by chewing electric wires. National fire protection authorities estimate that more than 1/5 of the "fires of unknown origin" in the U.S. are caused by rodents' gnawing matches or wiring. A few of these pests may even bite us, or our pets.

You can help prevent these problems by:

1. Clean up thoroughly and often any spilled food, garbage, pet food or grain, which might attract rodents. Don't forget fall decorations on doors or walls, and don't leave food or water out in a pet's dish overnight.
2. Keep all garbage in tightly-closed, metal cans, and keep the cans and area around them clean as well.
3. Clean up and remove all trash and rubbish, especially near your buildings.
4. Be sure all outside doors, windows and vents fit snugly, with no gaps, and are kept closed, especially at night. A mouse needs only a 3/8-inch crack or hole to get inside.
5. Seal up any hole or crack in the outside of any building that is big enough for a rodent to enter. Pay special attention to places where wires, pipes, or other utility lines enter a building.
6. Keep plants and shrubs trimmed back at least 12 inches from the outer surface of any building. These can provide rodents food, shelter, and an easy way up to higher entry points. Rodents climb very well.

Call us today so we can help you detect, survey for and eliminate rodents from your home. ■

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Shoo Fly ... Don't Bother Me

Those shiny, greenish flies with a thin covering of golden-colored hairs on their body, buzzing around by your window are probably Cluster flies, and every autumn, they become pests in homes, schools, and commercial buildings throughout much of the U.S. Cluster fly larvae feed inside a common species of earthworms during the summer. As fall approaches, the last summer generations of adults emerge from the soil and look for a nice, warm place to hibernate, like your attic, wall voids, or window sills. These hardy little insects can travel more than a mile for a suitable site. They emerge in the spring to breed and lay eggs on the soil surface near the earthworms, which the larvae then infest.

Cluster flies are troublesome because often more than 100,000 of them will invade a single home. They can become active again during any warm spells in winter, and again in early spring, and try to find openings to go back outside. The best thing a homeowner do is vacuum them up then remove the vacuum bag, seal it in a larger plastic bag, and put that bag in your normal trash. Preventive careful examination and sealing of all likely entry points before the first cold nights can keep most of these flies out. Call us to do a thorough exterior barrier treatment. This can usually prevent all or the vast majority from getting inside. This must be done before the first cold nights to be effective. ■



Controlling Moisture in Your Home

Nearly all pests, termites, roaches, ants, or any other common structural pest, need three things for survival ... food, water, and harborage (a place to live and hide). Interrupt any one of these three and you reduce the success rate of the pest. Water is one of the easiest to control, thus putting stress on the pests. You might not be able to totally eliminate the pest, but you could help reduce the pest population and slow its reproduction rate.

Starting at the top of the structure, make sure that any flat roofs drain properly. Many pests, from birds to mosquitoes, consider standing roof water a great source for their needs. Also make sure that the gutters are not clogged and that they are sloped to drain. Even clean gutters can pool water if they are sloped in the wrong direction. Look at downspouts and make sure that the water is directed **away** from the building. Home improvement stores now sell extensions to carry water away from the foundation.

Next, look for any window or door leaks. These can be easily repaired using sealers and weather-stripping. Also check sump pump discharges and condensation drip lines from air conditioners.

These should be directed away from buildings. Look for hose faucet leaks as well and turn off hoses at the faucet when not in use to reduce chances of dripping at the foundation. If you still notice excessive water outside, check landscape irrigation systems. Be sure that water is not being sprayed on the building and that the system is not over-watering the area. Lastly, make sure the soil around the foundation is sloped away from the structure. Excessive moisture at the foundation may lead to foundation defects as well as pests.

In the basement or crawlspace, all plumbing leaks should be repaired as soon as discovered. Dryer vents should be vented to the outside and vents lines should be in good condition so that they do not leak humidity into the crawlspace or basement. Soil in crawlspaces or dirt floor basements can lead to humid air, which condenses on wood in the area. This moisture can contribute to infestation by wood destroying insects such as subterranean termites, carpenter ants, and even wood boring beetles. Moisture can also lead to decay of the wood, which can result in expensive repairs. It's a good idea to install moisture or vapor barriers in these areas. ■

If you have questions about moisture control, call us and we will be happy to inspect accessible areas and prescribe steps to help you reduce your chances of pests. Fewer pests mean better protection of your investment.



Keeping Pests Out of the Pantry

Now is the perfect time to thoroughly inspect the grain products in your pantry. Items such as crackers, cookies, cereals, grains and nuts are particularly vulnerable. Even dried flowers can be infested.

If you see any "webbing," small silk spots, damaged food, or live insects, put the infested product in a sealed container and call us. We can identify the culprit and prescribe a treatment program before the problem blossoms into a major infestation. Simply throwing away infested food may not solve the problem!

ABC Pest Control Company



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Bed Bugs Plague Families

By the late 20th century, bed bugs had gone from being a major pest to being quite rare. Scientists attribute this to:

- More vigilant homeowners knew tell-tale signs.
- Advanced pest control technology.
- Natural decline in the cyclical nature of pests.
- More concern about pests, and a tendency to seek pest control before major infestation.

Bed bugs have made an amazing resurgence in the past few years. The resurgence may be attributed to the following factors:

- More common travel.
- More transient society with people moving more often.
- Modern pest control technology that targets pests so whole areas are not treated, but rather certain areas where pests are known to live.

The most common bed bug is flat, has a reddish to brownish color, and about the size and shape of a lentil. Bed bugs are nocturnal so you normally won't see them during the day. Surprisingly, the bed bug does not only infest seams and beds, but will also hide in cracks and crevices like behind baseboards and behind picture frames on walls. They will live anywhere humans are close by ... and not just in bedrooms. Bed bugs prosper in homes, apartments,



Bed Bug

hospitals, hotels and dormitories. Bed bug infestations are not an indication of dirt or poor sanitation; bed bugs do just as well in perfectly clean houses or hotels.

A bed bug must shed its shell to grow and it requires a blood meal. If no blood meal is available, the bed bug can wait for up to a year! Usually small droplets on sheets or upholstery are the first sign of bed bugs. These are bed bug droppings. Also, some people react to bites and may notice welts that itch. Fortunately, there is no data to confirm that bed bugs spread disease.

If you suspect bed bug infestation, contact our company for a thorough inspection. If you do have a bed bug infestation, don't panic, and don't feel that you have an unclean area. Remember, bed bugs infest even the cleanest areas. We have the latest technologies to control bed bugs in your structure. When the infested area is found, we will target our treatment strategies to have the maximum effectiveness with minimum disruption of your activities. ■

These Ladies are a Nuisance

About the time of the first frost, Ladybugs or Ladybird Beetles may gather on the southern or western sides of your house. They will come into your house through any crack, crevice, open window, or hole. They come in and remain inactive until spring, and do not cause any big problem except for their presence, sometimes in great numbers. They become active when it gets warm again and try to find their way back outside, where they continue their helpful work of eating lots of other insects, especially several kinds of major plant pests. They may become active during any warm periods during the winter, and often fly to windows or lights at those times. Some kinds of Ladybugs, like the common, wide-spread Multi-

colored Asian Ladybug, can come into a house in unbelievable numbers, often tens-of-thousands. The best thing to do when they become active in the spring is to help them get outside again, alive. You could vacuum the beetles up, then remove the vacuum bag, seal it in a larger plastic bag, and put that bag in your normal trash. But it is better to do a preventive careful examination and sealing of all likely entry points before the first cold nights. This can keep most or all of these pests out. For heavy infestations, you may need our help to do on-going surveillance for these, set up special light traps, and possibly to treat for any associated secondary pest problems that occur, like carpet beetles, or booklice. ■

