

# Pest Gazette

Brought to you by ABC Pest Control Company



## Summer Pests Come Back to Bug You

When the weather is warm, we spend more time outside. Unfortunately a lot of pests do, too. In the summer, many pests move around, build up bigger colonies, and try to visit exactly the same places we do. Some pests are much more common during summer months. These include filth flies, bats, stinging insects, ants, chipmunks and other urban wildlife. You don't want these pests around to spoil an otherwise pleasant summer, because they could really ruin your fun. Although many

of these pests don't cause significant damage to your house or business, they can threaten your health and interrupt your daily activities. For example, besides being bothersome, filth flies can also transmit a wide variety of diseases to humans.

If you are having trouble with any of these common summer pests, our professionals can do a thorough survey, identify the pests involved, and help you plan and carry out an effective, efficient control program. Call us for assistance.

## One Dirty Pest

**Filth flies.** These pests are well named. They breed in filth such as moist, decaying organic matter, and they feed by "spitting out" saliva and former stomach contents onto their intended next meal. After a few seconds, they suck up the fluid they spit out, along

with anything it might have dissolved. They can also spread serious diseases in the process.

There are about 200 species of filth flies and they have been proven to spread more than 65 kinds of human diseases, including: leprosy, typhoid, E. coli, cholera, polio, TB,

"Staph," and several other kinds of food poisoning. Problems for humans arise when a fly feeds on some filth, such as garbage, then fly directly onto our plate or sandwich. Their habit of regurgitating some of their stomach contents when they feed, and their hairy bodies and feet make it easy for filth flies to transmit pathogens to humans. Sanitation and

mechanical controls can have long-term effects on reducing filth fly populations.

**Bats.** Biologists have named more than 920 species of bats, one quarter of all known

mammal species. The oldest bat fossils are around 50 million years old, and paleontologists assume bats had been flying around for a few million years before that. The bat most *continued on page 2*

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## One Dirty Pest (continued)

Americans probably know best in the summer is the Little Brown Bat, which roosts in attics and barns and catches insects in flight in the night.

Although their eyesight is better than most people think, bats routinely depend on their sonar-like echo-location system to maneuver and hunt flying insects.

Medical concerns about bats are very small, but there is a risk of rabies; which is found in less than one percent of any typical North American insect-feeding bat population. The main situation in which humans are at any risk is when the bat is either sick or injured and falls down within a human occupied area, or at least to within a human's reach.

Control of bats, within the continental U.S. and similar temperate regions, is mainly a combination of removal followed by exclusion. As with other unwanted summertime pests, if you have a bat problem, contact your local licensed and professionally trained pest management professional (PMP).

*“Although their eyesight is better than most people think, bats routinely depend on their sonar-like echo-location system to maneuver and hunt flying insects.”*



Baldfaced hornet



European hornet



Paper wasp

## Watch Out! These Pests Sting

As the weather gets warmer, people spend more time outdoors. It's also the time of year when stinging pests are looking for food and increasing their colony size. Some of the most important stinging insects include baldfaced hornets, European hornets, paper wasps, yellow jackets, and fire ants. You can help avoid attracting stinging insects and reduce your risk of being stung by: closing up garbage in plastic bags, not leaving partial cans of soda around outside, being careful around flowers, and by not wearing strong floral perfumes or colognes outdoors.

**Baldfaced hornets** are 5/8" to 3/4" long wasps and are black with light yellow to white markings.

**European hornets** are 3/4" to 1" long wasps and are brown with yellow abdominal stripes and a pale face. Baldfaced and European hornets build large usually grayish or brownish-colored "paper carton" aerial nests, often as large as a basketball.

**Chipmunks.** There are two chipmunk species in North America, one eastern and one western, which are common and frequently cause urban pest problems. Chipmunks are small ground-dwelling squirrels, which mainly eat grain, seeds and roots. They are brownish, with tan, black, and white stripes on the sides of their head and usually their body as well. They are 5" to 6" long with a 3" to 4" long tail, which is hairy, but not bushy like a tree squirrels tail. They often eat garden plants, bulbs and seeds from bird feeders. Their tunneling can seriously undermine landscape timbers, brick or concrete walks, or retaining walls. They sometimes come indoors and can be hosts of young ticks and adult fleas, which may bite people or pets. An effective control strategy includes eliminating or denying them access to foods, reducing ground cover so they are exposed to natural predators, and modifying walks or landscaping so they can't easily tunnel under their edges. Trapping is an option, but it is seldom very effective outdoors. The best thing to do is to call us for assistance to help you plan and carry out an effective, efficient control program. ■

Baldfaced hornets' nests usually hang in an exposed location such as from a tree, while the European hornet is often located in some protected area, like a wall void, an attic, or within the branches of a bush. Workers of both species protect their nests and give a painful sting, sometimes repeated stings, if they or their nest are disturbed. Control of hornets and removal of their nests should be left to our properly trained and equipped professionals.

**Paper wasps** are 5/8" to 3/4" long, with narrow bodies, usually brownish with yellow markings. Some have red markings. They build a grayish-colored, single layer, paper-like comb with cells opening downward, and attached by a single long pedicel to a twig, tree branch, or horizontal surface such as a window frame. The workers are quite protective of their nest and will give painful stings if disturbed.



Honeybee

While *honeybees* are among the most beneficial insects, they can be pests when they end up in our living space after they build hives in walls or in nearby bushes. The problem is, honeybees can sting, and some people react violently. The much-publicized Africanized honeybees, sometimes called “killer bees,” are now well established in warm areas of the U.S. and are gradually moving farther north each year.

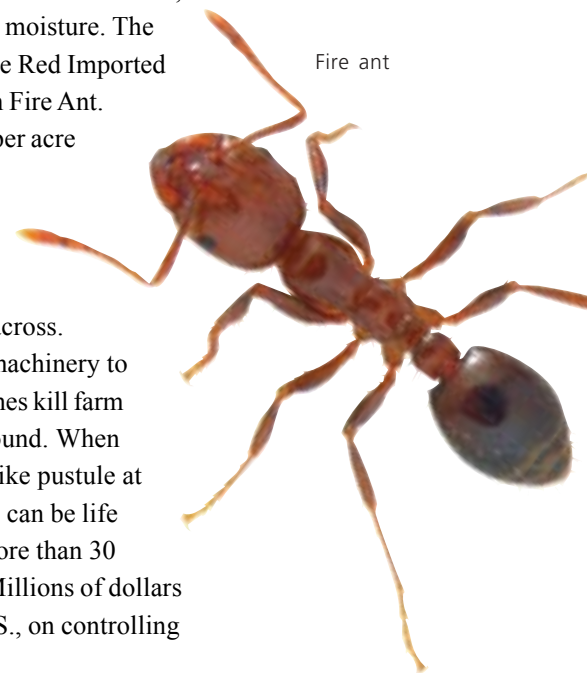
By midsummer, honeybees may reach very high populations. Interiors should not be fogged if honeybees are found living there, because other bees may reoccupy the hive, thus perpetuating the problem. Instead, a pest management company should be called to correct the problem with maximum care and minimal risk to the occupants

*Cicada Killer Wasps* are large wasps, which almost never sting people. They are about 1" to 1 5/8" long, dark brown, with some yellow cross-stripes on their abdomen, and have orange-brown wings. They get their name because females specifically catch, sting to paralyze and bury individual cicadas in 3/4" diameter tunnels that they have previously dug in sandy soil. After they drag a paralyzed cicada deep enough into a tunnel, they lay a single egg on it and then fill in the tunnel. Their larva will feed on that cicada until it is mature. It will then dig its way out and emerge as a new adult wasp. People often become concerned because there will usually be about six or more of these wasps flying low to the ground around and above any small patch of open, sandy soil, which they need for digging more brood tunnels. There is usually no need to control these wasps, but eliminating open patches of sandy soil; covering them entirely with heavy screen; covering such areas over with sod or, as a last resort, possibly drenching that soil with a properly-labeled residual

insecticide will reduce or eliminate a local population of these wasps. Such a treatment can often stop their activity, or keep others away from that spot, at least temporarily. The most important thing is to correctly ID these and make sure they are **not** the European Hornets described above, which can pose a serious stinging threat.

*Fire ants* get their name from their very painful bites and stings. They are small yellowish-red to black ants. They are established from Virginia to Florida, and from Georgia to California. They usually nest in the ground, but sometimes a partial or whole colony may be located within a structure, usually in a wall void near heat or moisture. The two most important species are the Red Imported Fire Ant (RIFA), and the Southern Fire Ant. There may be 30 to 100 colonies per acre with 80,000 to 250,000 ants per colony. Some colonies have more than one queen and can be much larger. A typical colony mound is rounded, about 18" high and 24" across. Such mounds have caused farm machinery to break, and multiple stings sometimes kill farm animals when they step into a mound. When stung, humans develop a blister-like pustule at the site and true allergic reactions can be life threatening. RIFA stings cause more than 30 human deaths a year in the U.S. Millions of dollars are spent each year, just in the U.S., on controlling the RIFA.

*Yellow Jackets* are 3/8" to 5/8" long, depending on the species, with their respective queens being about 25 percent longer. Most are black with yellow stripes, but some have red markings, and some are black with white markings. These are day-active predatory insects. Like the hornets, they build paper-like nest containing several layers of cells. A mature colony may have 2,000-6,000 cells and 1,000-4,000 workers. Nests are sometimes built in open aerial spots, or within bushes, but most species build their nest in a cavity dug out below ground. Abandoned rodent burrows are common nesting sites. The entrances are guarded, as they are very protective of their nest. They can quickly become aggressive if their nest is disturbed. Workers can repeatedly inflict painful stings. Yellow jacket control or nest removal is best left to a PMP. ■



Fire ant



Cicada killer wasp



Yellow jacket



# Pesky Ants Work Hard During the Summer

**Odorous House Ants.** When your house is suddenly invaded by hundreds of small-to-medium sized, blackish ants after a heavy rain, they are likely to be Odorous House Ants. Although these ants sometimes make a nest in a wall void or a similar place in a house, their main nest is usually outdoors, in the ground by a shrub, or under a layer of mulch. Following their trails to where they disappear into a crack under a door, or other opening to the outside, may help confirm that identification (ID). If you crush one or two of them and they smell like the odor of rotting coconut, this will also help ID them as Odorous House Ants. Their colonies vary in size, with 300 to 300,000 workers, and may include many queens. These ants feed on a variety of foods, but they generally prefer sweets. Some workers may live more than a year. Workers from different colonies are not hostile to each other, and routinely share the same trails.

**Pavement Ants.** Lines of small-to-medium sized, blackish ants, trailing along water pipes or utility lines, through walls, especially from outdoors, are very likely to be Pavement Ants. An average colony contains 3 - 4,000 workers, and has several queens. Outside nests are usually located under the edge of a large stone or a sidewalk. They may nest in wall voids, in insulation, under a floor, or in ground-level masonry. Foraging trails may reach 30 ft., or farther, from a nest. These ants will feed on nearly anything, but often prefer meats or greasy foods. They are not usually aggressive toward humans, but they sometimes bite and have a very painful sting. Workers of this species are intermediate hosts of two different tapeworms.

**Argentine Ants.** Workers of these ants are small and light to dark-brown in color. They are often associated with transporting or moving items like lumber. Outdoors, Argentine ants nest in or under, almost any material or structure including: soil, mulch, tree holes, stones, concrete slabs, roof tiles, logs, leaf litter, or other debris. They are very aggressive and can drive out almost any other ant species from a site. Their colonies can contain 50,000 to 600,000 individuals.

They are omnivorous and will eat any accessible food, but prefer sweets and fruits. Cool weather and heavy rains can sometimes cause Argentine ant colonies to migrate indoors. They enter through exterior cracks, or unsealed doors and nest in wall voids, under carpets, or in insulation. You can help reduce their access to food, nest sites, and foraging areas by correcting any moisture problems and sealing up all cracks inside and outside your home. Keep branches and twigs cut back several inches from the roof and sides. An Argentine ant colony can suffer the loss of 99 percent of their population and still survive and rebuild. Only about 10 percent of an ant colony's workers are actively foraging outside their nest at any time, so killing ants along trails may not even make a dent in their population, and might cause them to move their nest or split into two or more nests before their main nest can be found and effectively controlled.

**White-footed Ants.** These are small, with a single flattened node. They resemble odorous house ants, but have a little darker body and very pale tarsi. These ants are widespread in tropical and subtropical areas of the world, including south Florida, southern California and Hawaii. These ants' natural nesting sites include hollows in any tree, under loose bark, or even in or under piles of organic debris. Their colonies usually number in the millions of ants. They often infest attics of residential structures, and frequently cause electrical problems by infesting junction and switch boxes and shorting out circuits. Winged females mate with wingless males inside the colony and then emerge in large numbers, disperse, and establish new colonies. In Florida, this happens from late May to mid-June each year. White-footed ants are hard to control and they may suddenly invade a structure in overwhelming numbers.

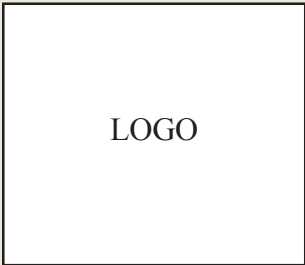
Controlling these ants requires that you find their nest and treat it thoroughly. This process should be left to your pest management professional. ■

## Summertime Blues

Summertime "panic calls" to PMPs are not unusual. Honeybees, yellow jackets, and filth flies have a knack for showing up in porches just hours before guests are due to arrive. Often, customers suddenly discover bats in the attic or chipmunks damaging landscaping or plants.

Homeowners and building managers should leave the control of pests, especially stinging pests and urban wildlife, to a professional pest management company. Call us at the first sign of a problem to avoid a more difficult and costly control later.

## ABC Pest Control Company



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