



PEST PRO

P.O. Box 1514 • White Plains, NY 10602

(914) 761-4844

website: www.pestpro.us

e-mail: fcpestpro@aol.com

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The Pest Bulletin

Crickets and Earwigs—OH MY!

Crickets and earwigs are two of the many insects which occasionally invade homes from outdoors, especially in the summer and early fall months. They are annoying when just a few invade, but are especially aggravating in large numbers.

There are many kinds of crickets that invade homes. *Field* and *mole crickets* do not survive more than a few weeks indoors, but both *house crickets* (which look very similar to field crickets) and *camel crickets* can survive indoors, and even start reproducing. Females are nice and quiet—it's the males which chirp to



attract the females, and the chirping can be extremely annoying. Both males and females occasionally eat holes in clothes, draperies, carpeting, and upholstery, especially if the item is in a dark, damp area, or is soiled.

Earwigs have a characteristic set of "pincers" or forceps on their rear end which they use for defense and to capture prey. They sometimes multiply so rapidly that they start wandering into homes and other buildings in large numbers. Earwigs are normally minor pests of plants outdoors. Indoors some kinds smell but mainly they are a nuisance.



Do earwigs actually enter ears? Yes, there have been reports of earwigs in ears, but it is extremely rare. The ear is a nice dark, moist place an insect can enter, especially when the person is asleep. The most common object in ears, according to hospital reports, is actually cockroaches, not earwigs. (Maybe they should be called "ear roaches"?) Fortunately, unlike the horror movies, none of these pests bore into a person's brain. Or at least this has never happened...yet!

Where Do Flies Come From?

A question people often ask is, "Where are all these flies coming from?" The answer depends on the type of fly. Here are some of the common places where different kinds of flies breed.

Overripe fruits—Fruit flies ("vinegar flies") are strongly attracted to rotting or fermenting scents. Overripe or rotting fruits and vegetables, drain pans under refrigerators, gunky mops, and unrinsed recyclable bottles and cans are common breeding places.



Drains—Drain flies lay their eggs on the insides of slimy floor and sink drains and in similar situations. The larvae spend their entire lives feeding on the gunk there.

Animal droppings—This is a common breeding place for filth flies (the house fly is one of these). Daily removal of

pet droppings is key. **Damp soil**—Fungus gnats breed in the damp soil of potted plants, and in any other soil that is high in organic material and constantly moist.

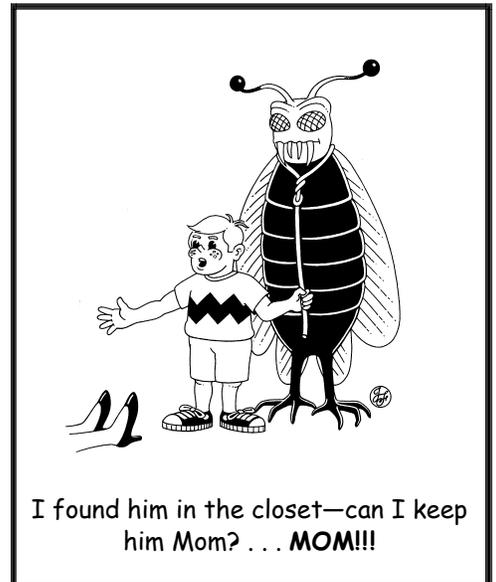
Earthworms—Cluster fly larvae feed inside the bodies of earthworms. If there are large populations of earthworms nearby (for instance, a nearby park with large lawns), cluster flies sometimes enter buildings in early fall looking for a place to overwinter.

Dead snails and animal carcasses are a common breeding place for certain flies.

Dumpsters, garbage cans, and trash compactors—Many kinds of flies breed in damp garbage (tight-fitting lids and at least weekly removal are key), as well as the crud that can accumulate in the bottom of these containers.

Pest Prevention Tip of the Month

Glue down any loose edges of wallpaper. These areas provide good hiding places for insects like cockroaches and silverfish, and the wallpaper backing and glue are some of their favorite foods.



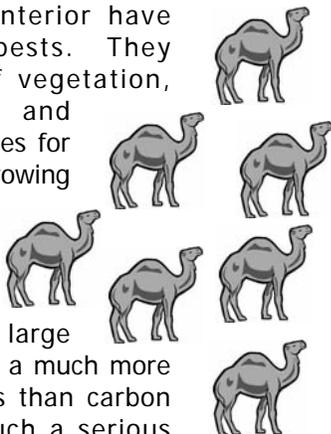
I found him in the closet—can I keep him Mom? . . . MOM!!!

Camels as Pests?

With an estimated population that doubles every nine years, the 1.2 million wild camels in Australia's interior have become very serious pests. They trample large areas of vegetation, damage water holes, and compete with native species for food, thereby creating a growing environmental problem.

But that's only part of the problem camels cause. Their digestive tract produces large amounts of methane gas, a much more powerful greenhouse gas than carbon dioxide. Camels are such a serious problem that the Australian government is proposing issuing carbon credits as an award for every camel killed. If it passes, it will be the government's first carbon offset program that aims to reward farmers and investors for steps to cut greenhouse gas emissions.

It is well known that termites also produce unusually large amounts of methane gas, and their numbers are much larger than camels. Perhaps in the future, carbon credits will be awarded for controlling them as well?



Do Bed Bugs Carry 'Superbugs'?

Canadian researchers have found bed bugs carrying antibiotic-resistant bacteria, or superbugs. In the study, bed bugs were removed from patients in an area in Canada where both bed bug infestations, and strains of antibiotic-resistant bacteria, are increasing. Amazingly, two types of drug-resistant bacteria were found on the five bed bugs tested.

This is a surprise finding because scientists had believed bed bugs were not capable of spreading infections. Past tests have shown bed bugs are not carriers of blood-borne diseases like hepatitis or HIV. Although more tests need to be conducted, it is possible that even though bed bugs transmit other blood-borne diseases, they are capable of spreading drug-resistant bacteria.



Fire Ants SPREAD During Floods

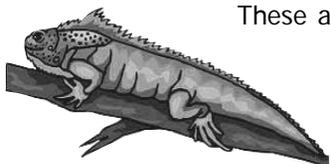
Fire ants have a number of ways they spread to new areas, but one of the most amazing, and scary ways, occurs during a flood. These ants are able to lock their legs and jaws together to form a living raft. The rafts are so well made that even the ants on the bottom layer have enough oxygen and don't die. Each ant's body has an individual air bubble that helps it float in water and buoys the entire raft. An ant raft can survive for possibly months, just drifting about until it finds dry land to start a new infestation.

Ticks & Mites Infest Exotic Reptiles

About 1.8 million reptiles are imported into this country each year for pets. Some of these pets escape, or are set free. In a study reported in a recent issue of the *Journal of Medical Entomology*, exotic reptiles were caught in the wild in Florida, and then inspected for ticks and mites. More than half of these non-native reptiles were infested. Both native and non-native ticks and mites were found—and some of these blood-suckers had never before been found wild in this country.

This is a very dangerous situation. Not only will some of these parasites jump to our native reptiles (lizards, snakes, turtles, etc.) and affect their populations, but parasites like these may be carrying new disease agents. These diseases may eventually affect local wildlife populations, as well as domestic animals, and humans.

These are important reasons not to let loose exotic reptiles and other pets, or not to buy them in the first place.



Police Officer Attacked By a Rat

In a bizarre incident, a police officer riding in the passenger seat on his way to a crime scene felt *something* on the back of his neck. The officer swiped at his neck and discovered it was a big rat crawling on him. The rat bit the officer's palm and thumb before he was able to throw it out the car window.

The officer's partner rushed him to the hospital, where they were told they needed to retrieve the rat to test it for diseases. Fortunately they were able to go back and find the rat, kill it, and bag it. The officer is on leave, waiting to see if the rat is diseased.



EMERGENCY



Termites Eat Millions of Rupees

A bank manager in India recently discovered termites had eaten through 10 million Indian rupees (\$222,000). The money had been placed in a steel chest that was inside a locked, reinforced room. The expensive damage was discovered in April, just three months later. Stories of termites literally eating paper money are not uncommon. They consume any wood or wood-based product they can reach.

