



# PEST PRO

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## The Pest Bulletin

# Unwanted Holiday Visitors



"Jingle bells, jingle bells,  
mice are on their way.  
You can scream and you  
can yell, but you can't  
keep them away!"

'Tis the season of colder weather, warm hearths, and visiting friends and relatives. Unfortunately, friends and relatives are not the only visitors in late fall and winter. Rats and mice think our homes are theirs! In the cooler months rodents seek out warm, dry places, preferably near food, and houses are especially attractive to them.

Many of our customers ask how they

can keep mice and rats out of their homes. We have listed a few things below, but remember there is no absolutely sure way to prevent their entry. If your best efforts fail and the intruders still get in, our trained technicians will send them packing!

### HELP KEEP RODENTS OUT:

- Make sure all outside doors, including garage doors, fit snugly at the bottom and around the edges.
- Seal all cracks and openings in your outside walls and foundations, including around water pipes, and gas, cable, phone, and electrical lines.
- Seal around basement windows.

### AVOID ATTRACTING RODENTS:

- Keep bird feeders away from the home so fallen seed won't lure rodents close to your home. If a lot of feed ends up on the ground, try a different type of feeder.
- Keep grass and weeds cut short so rodents have less cover. Trim foliage away from your foundation, lower the height of dense groundcovers, and remove the lower branches of dense shrubs.
- Don't leave uneaten pet food and filled water bowls outside overnight.

# Reduce Your Fire Hazard

On the surface of things it might appear that pests have very little to do with fires. Fire experts, however, say that many home fires are caused by pests, including over 50% of home fires of "undetermined origin". Rats and mice are the main culprits, but even pests like birds, ants, and termites cause fires. Here's what happens.



Rats, mice, and birds like to *build nests* in or on buildings. These nests are built of dry and often highly flammable materials. They use pieces of fabric, shredded paper, pieces of string, dried grass, etc.—all perfect materials to catch fire. They'll even bring matches to their nest, and have been known to gnaw on the phosphorous coating, which can set their nests on fire. Sparrows love cigarette butts, and have been known to bring back still-smoldering butts that start a fire.

Electrical shorts and resulting fires can be caused when rodents *gnaw on electrical wires and cables*. Sometimes they gnaw into wires to

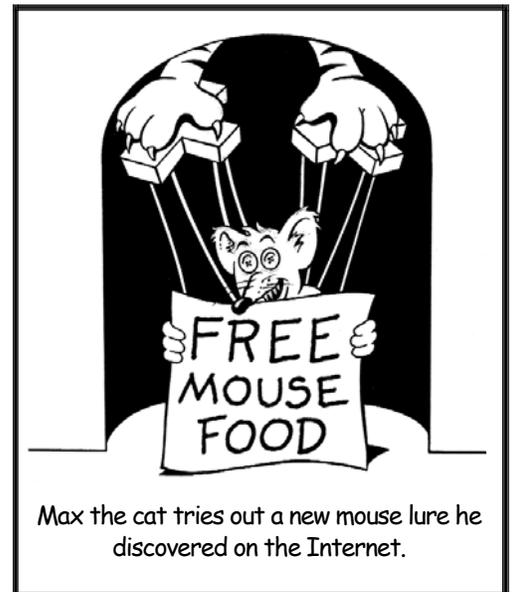
get to the cottony insulation material, which they use in their nests. But even if there is no cottony material in the wires, they seem to like to gnaw on hard substances like electrical wires.

Electrical shorts also have been caused by insects like termites and ants. These insects sometimes remove the protective insulation from around wires. Some ants are actually able to detect magnetic fields around wiring, and are attracted to these fields.

Pests are just one of many causes of fires, but it is one more important reason to have regular professional pest control services.

## Pest Prevention Tip of the Month

Clean leaves and branches out of gutters so that fall and winter rains don't back up in them and overflow. Run a hose through the gutters so you can find and repair leaks. Also make sure the downspouts are not clogged; water should run freely through them.



Max the cat tries out a new mouse lure he discovered on the Internet.

## Four Injured in Bee Attack



A man in a wheelchair was attacked by thousands of angry bees after he apparently disturbed their hive in Santa Ana, California. He had fallen out of his wheelchair and was yelling for help when three bystanders ran to his aid. But the bees were so aggressive that they turned on the three rescuers, causing them to retreat. They were eventually able to run back in and pull the man to safety—a very brave rescue.

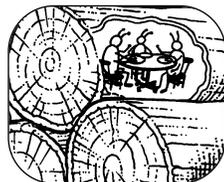


All four men were hospitalized for their bee stings. Two firefighters who responded to the scene also were stung. The entire street was shut down and businesses closed until beekeepers were able to remove the hive.

Because these bees were especially aggressive, they were sent to a laboratory to determine if they are Africanized bees. In September a 1,000 pound hog was killed by Africanized bees in Arizona. Africanized bees are spreading and now have been found in 11 states.

## Home Bed Bug Remedies Cause Illnesses

A new study by the Centers for Disease Control reports that people are getting sick when they treat their own homes for bed bugs. The study investigated 111 people who became ill, and one who died, from the misapplication of pesticides. The death, and nearly all of the illnesses, are the result of homeowners trying to control this pest themselves. The report recommends that people with bed bugs seek the services of a professional pest control company.



**BUYING GIFTS?** Don't bother giving an electronic mosquito repeller. These cool-looking electronic gizmos are available on the internet and in catalogs. They are supposed to repel mosquitoes. However, a study last year in the *Journal of Vector Ecology* showed they actually increase the biting rates of mosquitoes. Ow! Remember the old adage, "If it sounds too good to be true... it probably is."



## The World's 1<sup>st</sup> Malaria Vaccine

A new malaria vaccine has finished being tested in Africa, and it reduces the risk of children contracting malaria by about 50%. While that might not sound like much, this is a major breakthrough; a huge help in reducing malaria cases. The vaccine took 24 years to develop.

The suffering that malaria causes worldwide is immense. Almost 800,000 people die from malaria every year (mostly children under the age of five in Africa) and 225 million people contract the disease. The malaria parasite is transmitted in the saliva of the *Anopheles* mosquitoes. Although these mosquitoes are still common in the U.S., the malaria parasite was eliminated here by 1951. However, there are still many cases of malaria in this country (1,484 cases in 2009), among people who acquire this disease when they travel outside the United States. Because of these cases, constant vigilance is needed to prevent the malaria parasite from becoming reestablished in our mosquito population.



## Don't Move Firewood!

It's never a good idea to move firewood long distances. All sorts of serious pests have been unknowingly spread around the country that way, including gypsy moths, and now the emerald ash borer, and many other plant pests and diseases. More and more states are starting to set up "buy it where you burn it" campaigns to educate the public. *Don't move firewood!*

## The Fastest Flying Insects

The fastest flying insects are certain dragonflies and hawk moths, both of which have been clocked at around 35 mph. By comparison, honey bees have been clocked at only 13.9 mph at top speed, and hornets at 15.6 mph.

There is one report of a much faster insect. The male horse fly, in pursuit of a female, was clocked at an amazing 90 mph. But some people question the ability of a horse fly to fly this fast—we'll keep you posted as new information becomes available.



## We Are Grateful!

We want to take this opportunity to once again thank all our valued customers. We deeply appreciate your business, and we especially appreciate those of you who referred new customers.

We wish you and yours a HEALTHY, PROSPEROUS, and BUGFREE new year!