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SEPT/OCTOBER 2010

The Pest Bulletin

Bed Bugs Are Spreading

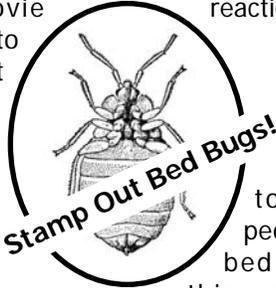
Across the country, the bed bug problem continues to increase. The situation in New York City is one example of what is happening in some areas.

A new Daily News-Marist poll revealed that *one person in 10* in New York City has had bed bugs in their homes—twice as many as last year. Put another way, the poll suggests that 800,000 people in the city have had these bloodsuckers crawling around in their sheets!

It's not just homes that are infested; people are reporting bed bugs in their workplace too. They've even been discovered recently in places like upscale clothing stores, health clubs,

judge's chambers, and movie theaters. The number of calls to the city's hotline shot up 33% last year. The city recently provided \$500,000 in anti-bed bug funds and is considering naming a special bed bug "czar" to combat this modern-day plague.

Part of the reason for the rapid spread of bed bugs in New York, and everywhere, is that these bugs can easily "hitchhike" on people's clothes, in gym bags, pocketbooks, etc., without a person knowing they are there. Often the first indications of an infestation are welts or bite marks, but about 20% of us don't show any



reaction to bed bug bites.

Bed bug control is time-consuming and requires a thorough knowledge of these pests, as well as the proper materials to control them. Some people have tried to control bed bugs themselves, but this never works. Don't wait while the bugs spread to other rooms and your friends—call us to do it right.

Pest Prevention Tip of the Month

Dense landscaping flush with the ground provides shelter for wandering rats, mice, and other rodents. Pruning out the lowest branches of shrubs and trees eliminates these hiding places and helps reduce "rodent curb appeal." A good height to clear is up to about 18 inches off the ground.

A New Super-Stinky Bug

The *brown marmorated stink bug* is a relatively new pest that is believed to have "hitched a ride" in packing crates that originated from China or Japan. It probably arrived in Allentown, Pennsylvania about 1996, but it was not positively identified until 2001. It has been spreading quite rapidly since then and has already been found in 26 states, all the way west to California and Oregon. Unfortunately, it is expected to spread throughout the country.

Stink bugs wandering about indoors are a nuisance, but this particular species has an especially strong, unpleasant, and long-lasting odor—stronger and longer-lasting than many other stink bugs. The smell is a defense mechanism meant to prevent birds and other predators from eating it, so the more obnoxious the smell, the better for the bug. If you jostle or squeeze this bug, you will quickly find out why the name "stink bug" is so appropriate. You'll know what it is by its smell!



This insect congregates on the outside of homes on warm fall days. Eventually many of them find their way indoors through cracks and gaps. Like many other fall-invading pests, they are not active indoors except on warm fall, winter, and spring days, when they wake up and start wandering about.

The brown marmorated stink bug hibernates until May or early June. There are no natural predators of this insect. Call us to treat for this pest in late summer or fall just prior to bug congregation. We will likely see more of this pest in the years to come.



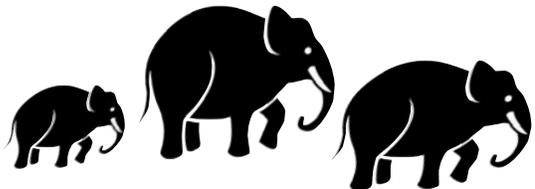
Here's your delivery ma'am—the cheese you ordered online.

Elephants Remember Bees

A bee's stinger cannot penetrate most areas of an elephant's tough hide, but it can penetrate around the eyes where the skin is much thinner, and on the inside of an elephant's sensitive trunk. Stings in these areas apparently are very painful and an experience an elephant remembers.

New research shows elephants make a specific rumbling sound, or alarm call, to warn their fellow herd members of imminent danger when bees are discovered. When this rumbling sound is recorded and played to other groups of elephants, it causes them to respond with similar alarm. Even a recording of buzzing bees elicits the elephant's alarm call.

Some farmers in Africa have begun using "beehive fences" to keep elephants out of areas where crops are growing. These fences are composed of beehives strung on wires. When elephants try to push through the wires, it shakes the hives violently and the bees swarm out and sting the elephants. The elephants quickly learn to avoid areas protected by the fences. Farmers like these fences because the hives also produce honey and other products, which can be harvested and sold.



Help Prevent Rabies!

September 28 is World Rabies Day, a day to raise awareness about rabies and enhance prevention and control methods. Before 1960, rabies was transferred to humans primarily by infected domestic animals, especially rabid dogs. Because of vaccination programs for domestic animals, today 93% of all rabies cases in humans come from contact with wild animals, especially raccoons, bats, skunks, and foxes. Rabies cases among cats are increasing, and now cats are four times more likely to become infected than dogs. Rabies is present in every state except Hawaii.

We encourage you to learn more about this preventable but deadly disease by visiting the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention web site at <http://www.cdc.gov/worldrabiesday/>.



Your Questions Answered

Q. Are bird and bat droppings a health hazard?

A. Yes! They can contain a number of disease-causing organisms. Histoplasmosis, the most common disease associated with bird and bat droppings, is caused by inhaling spores of the fungus *Histoplasmosis capsulatum*. Most infections cause only minor influenza-like symptoms, but in unusual cases it has killed people.

People inhale the fungal spores when they disturb an accumulation of bird and bat droppings where the fungus has been growing. Interestingly, the fungus is NOT found in fresh bird droppings—apparently because the droppings are too acidic for the fungus. It is more likely to start growing where there has been a large infestation of birds for several years, either indoors or outdoors.

The fungus can also grow in bat roosts, and unlike birds, in piles of fresh bat droppings.



Rodents Can Cause Fires

Rodents often amass piles of hoarded food that they consume later. These stashes can become fire hazards as well as a food source for insect pests.

Recently a fire damaged the kitchen of a home having a problem with mice in New Hampshire. Upon closer inspection, fire inspectors found



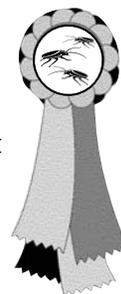
the cause of the fire—a rodent had stashed a pile of dog food around the dishwasher's heating element, pump and fan. The hoarded food prevented the dishwasher from ventilating properly.

Although dishwasher fires are uncommon, experts estimate that about half of all structure fires of "undetermined origin" are caused by invading rats and mice. This is due to their habits of hoarding food, building nests of easily flammable materials, and gnawing on almost anything, including electrical wires.

"The Best Food is Over Here!"

New research has shown that cockroaches behave like mini-restaurant critics, sharing recommendations about the best places to eat. It is well known that cockroaches spend most of their time in groups. In fact, there is a pheromone (a chemical scent) in their droppings that attracts other roaches. But even where there are no roach droppings, roaches will tend to group together and eat from one piece of food more than another identical piece. Scientists believe there may be a scent either in their saliva or on the outside of their bodies that tells other roaches, "This is a good place to eat."

If scientists can identify this substance, it could be used to make traps and baits more attractive.



ROACH SEAL OF APPROVAL