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The Pest Bulletin

Fall Invaders

Fall is typically a very pleasant time of year for people to spend time outdoors. But it's also a time when many pests are busy looking for a drier and more comfortable place to spend the winter. It's at this time that they start gathering on the outside of homes and other buildings, and can invade in huge numbers.

Fall invading insects enter through any exterior crevice or other opening. But they gradually move deeper indoors during the months ahead, attracted to the warmth and lights indoors, until they "spill out" into interior rooms.

Here are some of the fall invaders:

Asian lady beetles—This orange beetle with black spots was brought into

this country to feed on agricultural pests, but they move indoors in the fall in droves, leaving orange-colored stains.

Stink bugs—We've always had stink bugs, but the new brown marmorated stink bug is a much more serious pest that is spreading, smells horrible, and often invades in large numbers.

Cluster flies—There are several species of these flies, and along with face flies the adults can invade in huge numbers in the fall. Cluster fly maggots parasitize earthworms.

Rats and mice—One by one, these



rodents that had been living outdoors start coming indoors in the fall and early winter.

Other fall invaders are **boxelder bugs, elm leaf beetles, wasp and yellowjacket queens, crickets, earwigs, entire ant colonies, various wild animals, and many other pests.**

Our regular treatments are needed to prevent these pests from invading in the fall and winter. With some pests, additional special treatments are needed.

A History of Bed Bugs

Bed bugs, once a scourge, were almost completely wiped out in this country in the 1940's. But in recent years these blood-suckers have come back with a vengeance, and unfortunately they will become even more of a problem in the years ahead.

Bed bugs apparently originated in the Mediterranean area. They were first reported in England in 1583, and were brought to America on board the ships of the earliest colonists. Bed bugs gradually spread inland from our seaport towns. By the 1800's these bugs were widespread in hotels and boarding houses, where travelers unwittingly picked them up and transported them in their travel trunks.

In the early 1900's the bed bug problem became even worse when central heating became common. Before central heating, bed bugs would increase as the weather warmed, but with central heating, bed bugs started multiplying

year round. Populations became even larger under these ideal conditions, and there were cases where hoards of the bugs could actually be seen crawling from house to house.



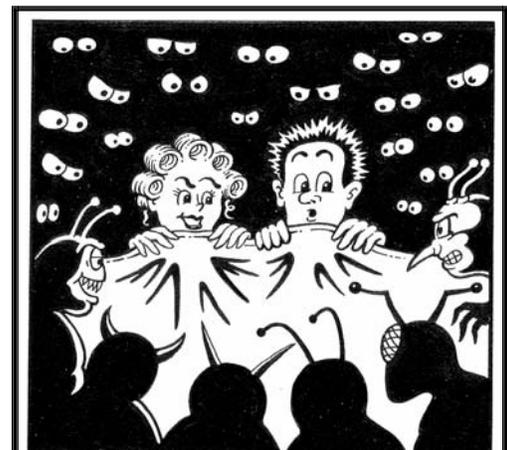
Early bed bug control was difficult. One remedy was to fill the cracks of a bed with gunpowder and set it on fire! Even highly toxic substances like mercury chloride were used. In 1942, DDT, a much safer product than

what was being used, was discovered to be extremely effective for bed bug control. With the widespread use of DDT, the bed bug problem disappeared within a few years.

It is DDT that we have to thank for the safer products that we use today. As the side effects of DDT became evident, it spurred the development of much safer products and technologies.

Pest Prevention Tip of the Month

Let food and water left out overnight invites trouble with pests, so remove it nightly. Raccoons, rodents, and many insect pests such as cockroaches and ants actually learn where to look for food, and will return each night for another feast.



I told you your home treatments WEREN'T WORKING, Honey...

Rodent Bites in New York City

Rodents bite about 100 New Yorkers in the city every year, according to recent city Health Department statistics. But this number is just based on bites that are reported—many rodent bites are never reported.

About 2/3 of these bites are from rats, and about 1/3 from mice. Many of the mouse bites happen when a mouse is caught in a trap and is still alive, and a homeowner tries to service the trap. Hungry rats are much more aggressive, and more likely to bite babies or young children, especially at night while they are sleeping.



If you or a loved one is bitten by a rodent, seek immediate medical attention. Some mice, but a greater percentage of rats, have bacteria on their teeth that can cause a disease known as rat bite fever. This illness can be easily treated by antibiotics, but can be deadly if left untreated.

Bargain Home—Not!

This sounds like a real steal! A five-bedroom home near Rexburg, Idaho, was listed earlier this year for only \$109,200—that's about \$66,000 below its market value. And no mice!



The problem is, it's infested with thousands of garter snakes. The home was apparently built on a snake den, and the snakes, and their progeny, return each fall to reproduce and wait out

the winter. They slither under the house, in the walls, inside the house, around the outside, and even in the ceiling. And they give off a bad odor. Two families so far have fled the house. The bank has foreclosed twice and is looking for new buyers. How about you?



Giant Ant Discovered

A giant ant, big enough to use in a science fiction movie, was recently found fossilized in rock that is about 50 million years old. The ant was a queen that was an amazing two inches long—really dinosaur-sized for an ant. Discovered in Wyoming, this is the largest ant ever found in the Western Hemisphere.

Note: there never have been people-sized ants, except in science fiction. Two inches long is huge for an ant, even in pre-historic times!

Termites Are Arriving on Ships

The extremely destructive *Formosan termite*, originally from China, is spreading in this country. But that's not the only termite from another continent that has invaded the United States. Florida, the state with more new termites than any other state, now has six new termite species that weren't around a century ago.

How are these termites getting here? It has been suspected that many new termite species have come to our country on infested ships. One study showed there is a strong correlation between Formosan termite infestations and how far it is to where boats dock on the ocean.



Now a new study has confirmed that many termite infestations on boats and ships moored at U. S. docks are new termite species. This is especially true for boats registered in other countries, but U.S. vessels may become infested with a new termite species if they have traveled to other countries and returned. While docked here, winged reproductive termites may emerge from these on-board infestations, fly to land, and start new colonies. It appears that requiring more thorough inspections of these boats is needed to prevent additional termite species from gaining a foothold here.

Rat Causes Fatal Crash

A rat recently caused a bizarre fatal car crash in Miami. According to the Miami Fire Rescue Chief, the rat had gotten to the top of one of the street lights and chewed through a cable, causing an explosion that knocked out the light. People nearby heard the explosion and walked over to the darkened area to find the dead, still smoking rat on the ground below the pole.

Unfortunately, because it was so dark, within a couple of minutes two cars crashed at the intersection and then hit the pedestrians, killing one person and injuring five others.



Stinky Socks Attract Mosquitoes

You may want to leave the room when you smell stinky socks, but mosquitoes are actually attracted to them!

Research showed a number of years ago that smelly feet are highly attractive to mosquitoes. They also discovered that limburger cheese, which smells somewhat like smelly feet, is also very attractive. Actually, some of the same microorganisms that cause feet to smell also give limburger cheese its delicious taste and smell.

The smelly foot odor is easily transferred to socks, making stinky socks very attractive to mosquitoes. Studies in Tanzania are now testing dirty socks to lure mosquitoes to traps. The smelly socks are a cheaper attractant than expensive chemical baits, and preliminary tests have shown they are just as alluring.

Mosquitoes transmit a wide variety of pathogens here and around the world. About 800,000 people a year die from mosquito-transmitted malaria.

