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The Pest Bulletin

Fall Invaders Are Coming!

As the weather gradually cools during the fall months, many kinds of pests begin invading homes and businesses, looking for a place to stay for the winter. The need for professional pest management services actually *increases* to prevent these fall and winter invaders from coming indoors.



are year-round pests that become worse problems in the fall. Still others are almost exclusively fall invaders. They include **boxelder bugs**, **elm leaf beetles**, **root weevils**, **cluster flies**, and **Asian lady beetles**.

Normally fall invaders would spend the winter in an old hollowed out stump or log, in space under bark, a rock, or leaf litter, or in an old rodent burrow. However, homes are highly attractive because they offer the warmth and shelter these pests seek, and may even

provide them with food.

For some of these fall and winter invaders, homes turn out *not* to be a good place to spend the winter. Many of the invaders eventually die because it's too dry indoors, or because they can't find their way back outside in the spring. Those that don't die wander about and can be quite a nuisance, stinking up the house, staining curtains, spoiling food, and causing other problems. Our regular treatments are needed to help keep out these fall and winter invaders.

You may be surprised at the huge number and variety of fall invading pests. Some of these, like **ants** and **spiders**, are pests year round; others, like **rats**, **mice**, **crickets**, and **earwigs**,

Little Mice are Big Troublemakers



It's surprising how **little mice** can spell **big trouble!** We'll be seeing lots of this trouble during the months ahead. The fall and early winter is



when mice (as well as rats) start looking for a warm place to spend the winter. Most homes and businesses provide not only warm and dry shelter, but also food for these invading rodents.

Mouse populations can quickly grow in size. When uncrowded, with enough food, water and nesting sites, female mice can produce as many as 50 mice in a single year! They are also incredibly adaptable. Wild house mice in a chamber kept at below freezing (24°F), have not only survived, they've continued to reproduce year after year.

Mice easily gain entry into most homes and other buildings. They can

squeeze through a crack as small as 1/4 inch in diameter, which is the size of a full-grown mouse skull. If they can get their head through the hole, the rest of their body will easily slide through.

Once a mouse has found its way indoors, other mice may use the same entryway. This happens because a mouse leaves a trail of body secretions and urine, and other mice simply follow that trail. Openings in the exterior of a home should be repaired, caulked, or plugged to slow down this parade of invading mice. It is also important to store food properly and to deny mice nesting and hiding places.

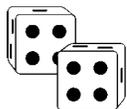
Call us if you are having problems with mice or rats. These common and destructive invaders multiply quickly when left uncontrolled.

Pest Prevention Tip of the Month

Attractive glass jars are a great place to store dry foods. Jars keep out flour moths and beetles, and other pests, and with a proper seal, will keep food fresher than the original containers that have been opened. You'll need all sizes of jars for everything from tall spaghetti noodles to nuts, beans, candy, cereal, and pet treats.



The offensive pests plan their attack!



Bear Wanders into Casino

A bear recently wandered right into a Lake Tahoe, California, casino, entering through a rear loading dock. Some locals think this was no mere coincidence, because the MontBleu Casino & Spa heavily promotes itself as "a habitat for everything wild". In fact, in one of its TV commercials a cocktail waitress throws a fresh fish to a waiting bear in the lounge.



After the bear incident, a casino employee quipped, "Evidently the bears out there heard the story that bears can eat at the nightclub at MontBleu. I guess we reached our target audience."

Mite Causes Mysterious Bite Outbreaks



How a new insect or mite is discovered can be fascinating. This just came out in the latest *Journal of Medical Entomology*.

On August 26, 2004, football players from Western Colorado State College attending a picnic at a park at Pittsburg State University in Pittsburg, Kansas, complained of itching and painful bites with small red welts. In the days that followed, other residents in the area started complaining of similar bites after they had been outdoors near trees. Most puzzling was the lack of evidence of any insects being seen or felt during the act of biting. Entomologists and medical personnel joined in the search, and it was eventually discovered that tiny mites, *Pyemotes herfsi*, had caused the bites.

These mites are originally from Europe and have never been reported here. They are unusual in that they feed on the larvae of certain oak gall midges that feed on leaves of pin oak and red oak trees. The mites disperse by wind, and when they land on humans or pets, they apparently attempt to feed, resulting in the bites. Bite outbreaks from these mites have now been reported in Kansas, Missouri, and Nebraska.



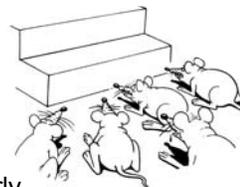
New Findings—Alcohol Increases Permeability of Skin

Recent studies suggest that a person should avoid drinking alcohol for at least 24 hours before coming into contact with DEET, the most common mosquito repellent that people apply to their skin, and other pesticides. Researchers at Northwestern University's Feinberg School of Medicine in Evanston, IL, found that rats given a dose of alcohol had skin that was two to three times more permeable to DEET, as well as to the weed killers tested. In general, the greater the alcohol intake, the leakier and more permeable the skin became.

The study concludes that until more is known, "extra care needs to be taken when handling chemicals if you've been drinking, even if it was a day earlier." It's possible that after drinking, even common substances like household cleansers on a person's hands would be more readily absorbed by the skin.

Rats Overrun Home

A one-bedroom house in Petaluma, California, was found to have approximately one thousand rats squirming together in cages, scurrying around the house, and burrowing below the foundation. The elderly man who lived there claimed the rodents loved him, but admitted that they began breeding uncontrollably, and the colony was out of control.



This is a case of animal hoarding, which is considered a form of obsessive/compulsive disorder. There are thousands of such cases every year in the United States, usually with animals like cats and dogs, but occasionally involving animals like guinea pigs, rats, and others.

Did You Know?

☑ It's not just our country that is experiencing increased **bed bug** problems; others are as well. Australia is reporting a 1,000% rise in bed bug outbreaks, according to some estimates, and a \$75 million-a-year loss to their tourism industry because of these blood-sucking insects. Britain and Europe are also reporting a steep rise in bed bug occurrences.

☑ New research reports that **body lice** can be eliminated from infested clothes and bedding materials when the items are immersed in water for 24 hours. Lice are also killed within minutes of being subjected to temperatures above 122°F and below 1°F. The researchers believe that similar results would be obtained with head lice.



☑ The Centers for Disease Control reports that **food poisoning** is a far bigger problem than most of us realize. They estimate that 5,000 people die and 76 million of us get sick each year in the U.S. from food poisoning. Food poisoning is the result of eating food contaminated by bacteria or other germs, or by eating food that has been improperly stored. In an unknown number of cases these germs have been transmitted by pests.