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The Pest Bulletin

What If You See Carpenter Ants?

Carpenter ants are often slow to cause visible damage, so it's not uncommon for a homeowner to see them wandering about for years and not notice any damage they are causing. DO NOT WAIT until you notice carpenter ant damage to control these pests. If you see ants crawling about, you should have them controlled BEFORE they spread or start causing major problems. That way you may be able to completely avoid their damage and avoid costly repair bills.

Carpenter ants are most active between midnight and 4am, so if you see these pests during the day, you are seeing only a small fraction of what is happening

at night. Be especially on the lookout for these pests if you have leaks or other moisture problems, blocked or leaking gutters, or a poorly ventilated attic or crawlspace. Tree stumps, dead tree limbs, and firewood also can encourage problems with carpenter ants, as well as trees and shrubs that touch a home or "crowd it", keeping the walls more moist.

Call us if you see suspicious-looking ants wandering about inside or outside your home. We're experts at controlling these difficult pests. We start by

inspecting your home to find where they are coming from. If their nests are all outside your home, we need to take steps to ensure the ants stay out. If the ants are already nesting inside, they need to be stopped before they have time to do more damage, or multiply and create more satellite colonies.



Green Pest Prevention Tip of the Month

Get rid of all standing water in plant saucers, plugged rain gutters, bird baths, and anything else that holds water, or replace it weekly. Not only can mosquitoes breed in these, but rodents and other animal pests come and drink from them.

THOSE BUSY ANTS

Around the country, problem ants from other countries are continuing to invade new areas. Fire ants, white-footed ants, Argentine ants, and pharaoh ants are among many new ant species that are gradually spreading.

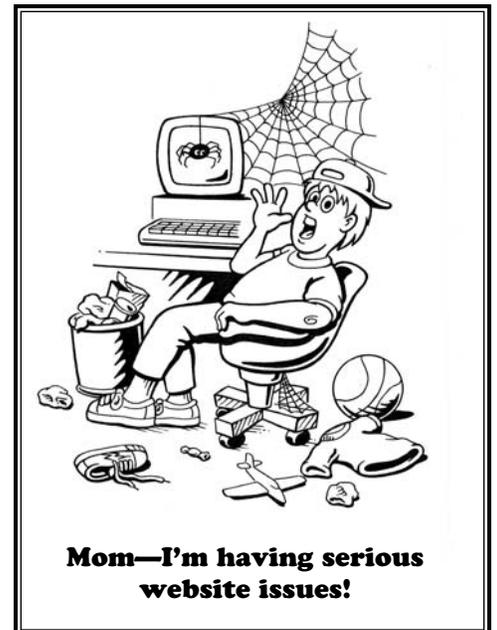
These and other prolific ant species are one of the reasons ants have become the nation's #1 pest, and are likely to remain in that position. Because unprotected homes experience repeated and persistent ant invasions each year, there are more calls to control invading ants than any other pest.

Ant colonies are humming with activity at this time of year. There is an abundance of food, and queen ants are laying eggs at their top capacity. At various times ants wander indoors, searching for food, moisture, or a better nesting site. If they find what they are looking for, expect more

ants to follow—often hundreds or thousands of ants within an hour of the original discovery.

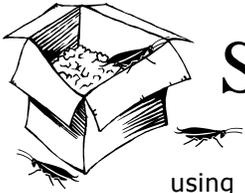
Most people don't realize that honeydew is a primary food of many ants, and honeydew is especially abundant right now. What is honeydew? It is a very sweet substance excreted by aphids, whiteflies, scales and certain other plant-sucking insects. Ants like honeydew so much that some species actually tend and protect the aphids and other pests that produce it, much like a cowboy cares for his herd of cattle.

Ants are resourceful, continually invading pests that require professional treatments to keep them controlled. If you are having problems with ants, call us—we're the area ant experts!



Mom—I'm having serious website issues!

Cockroaches as Pet Food?



Some people who keep lizards and other pets that prefer live food have been switching from using crickets to cockroaches.

Roaches don't have annoying chirps, are cheaper to raise than crickets, and can be bought easily over the internet.

The problem is, cockroaches are being shipped all over the country and they escape. In some areas the escapees can quickly establish breeding populations. The Turkestan cockroach, a new and serious invader, is one of those roaches available for purchase on the internet. Because of this problem, crickets are a far better choice for pet owners who need live food.

Our Pests Raise Havoc Overseas



We are always concerned about foreign pests that invade the United States. But in Japan, drywood termites native to America are causing serious problems. These pests were first discovered in Tokyo in 1976 and have now spread to 24 of Japan's 47 prefectures. They are tougher to kill than Japanese native termites because drywood termites thrive with little water, don't require contact with the ground, and can live anywhere in a structure.

Fly Swatting Basics

Want to improve your fly-swatting abilities? Flies are very good at evading a fly swatter or rolled up newspaper aimed at them. The best strategy is to aim just a bit forward of the fly, because the fly will take off in the direction its head points, according to research reported in the journal *Current Biology*. But sometimes the fly alters its body position in the last millisecond

(which is far faster than humans can react), and takes off in a slightly different direction. So don't be too cocky if you get that fly—swatting success comes from *knowledge, quickness, plus a bit of luck!*



Your Questions Answered

Q. *How do crawling insects spread germs?*

A. Our natural disgust of many crawling insects *really is justified* because these pests easily spread germs to food and surfaces where food is prepared.

Bacteria and other **pathogens** reside either on the outside or inside of the insect's body. As the insect walks over a surface, these pathogens may fall off the insect's body, or be in the insect's regurgitation, saliva, or feces.

Pests commonly pick up pathogens during their search for food and water. Some pests feed on decaying animal carcasses—a source of numerous pathogens. Discarded wrappings used for chicken and other meat products can also become contaminated and be a source of bacteria if pests get to them.

Insects provide a warm humid environment—an ideal place for many kinds of bacteria to multiply. Some of these bacteria are harmless to humans, but others cause a wide variety of common illnesses, including food poisoning.

Malaria in the United States



Malaria is a mosquito-transmitted disease that we don't normally encounter in the United States. However, there have been ongoing and serious malaria outbreaks in the past. Malaria is transmitted only by mosquitoes in the genus *Anopheles*, and these still thrive here. There is a constant risk that the protozoans that cause malaria could be re-established in the mosquito population by infected people coming into the country and being bitten by *Anopheles* mosquitoes.



The *Centers for Disease Control* recently reported that there were 1,505 cases of malaria in this country in 2007. All but one of these cases were in people who had traveled and acquired the disease outside of the United States; one was acquired through a blood transfusion. It is very important that people who travel overseas to areas where there is malaria take precautions to avoid contracting the disease and bringing it back to this country.

Rating Pain From Stings



All insect stings hurt, but some are more painful! The *Schmidt Pain Index* ranks the pain they cause, from 1 to 4, with 4 being the most painful. The index only rates pain caused by the insect order *Hymenoptera*, which includes bees, ants, wasps, and their kin. Fire ants have a painful sting, yet the pain they cause is much lower on the scale than many other stings.

A sting from a sweat bee is rated a 1, a fire ant a 1.2, honey bees, yellow jackets, and bald-faced hornets all get a 2, while harvester ants and paper wasps rate a 3.

The most painful sting is caused by the tarantula hawk wasp. It is the only one that rates a 4. Fortunately, tarantula hawks aren't aggressive stingers, but they will sting if they get caught in your clothing or if you try to grab one. The pain is described as "Pure, intense, brilliant pain. Like fire-walking over flaming charcoal with a 3-inch rusty nail in your heel. *Something to avoid!*"