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The Pest Bulletin

A Prescription for a Healthy Home

Pest management professionals are increasingly being recognized as "**Protectors of Health & Property**". Regular pest control not only means **fewer encounters** with nuisance pests, **less pest-caused filth** in our homes, and **less damage** to our homes and possessions—it also means a **healthier place to live**.

It is now well established that pests can cause allergy problems. The National Institutes of Health estimates that up to *15 million people* have allergic reactions to cockroaches. Fleas, rodents, and a variety of other pests can also cause allergic reactions.

Pests can also affect our health by their biting and stinging, and by carrying and spreading diseases. Various bees, wasps, ticks, mosquitoes, ants, fleas, and spiders bite or sting us, injecting their venom or saliva, or sucking up our blood. In doing this they transmit everything from *West Nile Virus* to *Lyme disease*. Also, many pests spread diseases such as common food poisoning by simply crawling on our food or our kitchen counters.

By controlling these pests, we make



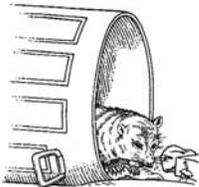
your life easier and more enjoyable, and help guard your health. We also eliminate the need for you to handle and store most pesticides, adding to the safety of your home. This is especially important when severe weather or other natural disasters strike.

So **thank you** for trusting us as we take a vital role in protecting you and your loved ones!

Pest Prevention Tip of the Month

A Christmas tree can be a source of pests, so we recommend you rinse it off with a strong jet of water before you bring it indoors. This will also remove dust, dirt, and loose needles, as well as help the tree stay moist until it starts absorbing water from its basin.

Winter Animal Invaders



Now is the time of year when wild animals are trying to find drier and warmer places to spend the

winter. Many people are tempted to leave these critters alone—until they find out they have caused all sorts of damage! They also bring with them pests that suck blood and transmit diseases.

Wild animals such as *squirrels, raccoons, skunks, opossums, rats, mice* and others cause various kinds of damage. Some of them dig up lawns, dig dens or burrows, push through screened areas, gnaw on wood or pipes, and do many other kinds of damage. Squirrels, for instance, wreck all kinds of havoc including chewing and enlarging entry holes, chewing insulation on electrical wiring, and tearing up attic insulation, and if they have babies the problems multiply.

In addition, over *175 communicable diseases* are shared by animals and humans, and because wildlife populations go untreated, some of the diseases that are rare in humans or our pets occur in high percentages in wildlife populations. Most rabies cases, for instance, now come from contact with wild animals. Before 1960 most rabies came from contact with domestic animals, especially dogs.

These diseases can be transmitted directly from the wild animals by bites or scratches, or in their urine or feces, or by the blood-sucking fleas, ticks, and mites these animals bring with them.

If you have wild animals seeking refuge in or around your home, let us expertly, safely and as humanely as possible remove these animals before they cause serious problems.



I'm singin' in the drain,
just singin' in the drain!

Thank you for your business and referrals!

New Bed Bug Findings

It is well known that some people may be bitten by bed bugs and not even realize it because the characteristic red welts don't show up. A recent study found a person's age is a big factor in his or her sensitivity to bed bug bites. This comprehensive study was conducted in seven large cities around the U.S.

Residents in *dwelling known to be infested with bed bugs* were asked if they had experienced bites from these pests. There were no differences by ethnicity or gender, but only *age*—a whopping 42% of people over 65 years old said they had not been bitten, compared to only 26% of people aged 11 to 65 said they had not been bitten. The assumption is that all of these people had actually been bitten. (About 20% of the general population does not show any reaction to bed bug bites.)

Other studies, using allergy skin prick tests, have confirmed these types of differences—a greater percentage of older people have no reaction to bed bug bites than younger people.

The majority of people who react to bed bug bites have itchy red welts. About half experience redness and discoloration at the bite site, and some may have itching but no welts.

The study also showed that people who have bigger reactions to mosquito bites also tend to have bigger reactions to bed bug bites.



Sheriff Trapped by Bees

A sheriff's deputy in North Carolina responded to a call of a person being attacked by bees, but then the bees got the upper hand. The honey bees swarmed over the officer's patrol car and trapped him inside the car for *three hours*. The angry bees had escaped from a broken box of hives being transported on a truck.

The bees were finally subdued by a combination of smoke and sugar water spray. Sugar water makes it harder for bees to fly, and they concentrate on grooming themselves to remove the sticky mixture, rather than attacking people.



New Illness-Causing Bacteria Found on Flies

Common house flies can carry literally hundreds of different disease-causing organisms. One would think that this had been studied so well that we wouldn't find any additional serious pathogens on flies. That's why a study that just came out in the June issue of the *Florida Entomologist* is so unsettling, because once again, it shows we know far less than we think we know—especially about serious diseases that flies can transmit.

When ordinary house flies (*Musca domestica*) were collected near the rear entrances and around dumpsters of just four restaurants in north central Florida, **eleven** different bacteria were found on them—including **five** species of bacteria that had never been recorded on house flies before. Even more alarming is the finding that most of the eleven kinds of bacteria collected, including *E. coli*, *Shigella*, three kinds of *Staphylococcus*, and *Cronobacter*, are very serious pathogens of humans. They are known to cause such diseases like *meningitis*, *food poisoning*, *diarrhea*, *abscesses*, *bloodstream infections*, and *hemorrhagic colitis*—nothing any of us wants!

There are several factors which make flies serious transmitters of disease-causing organisms. Flies can easily pick up all kinds of pathogens because they are attracted to decaying animal matter and feces where pathogens are common. Some of these germs may be on the "feet" of flies, but even more germs multiply inside their bodies. These germs are spread when flies land on a surface, regurgitate food, secrete saliva, or defecate. When flies land on our food or food-preparation surfaces, they place these pathogens directly where we come into contact with them.

Solar Panels Fool Bugs

New research shows that solar panels strongly attract water-loving insects. Solar panels, like glass-clad buildings, are strong sources of polarized light. Over 300 species of aquatic insects, including mayflies and caddisflies, mistake these areas for shiny, dark surfaces of water. Water-loving bugs fly toward the panels and apparently are so convinced they have found water that they even try to lay eggs on them.

Scientists were able to greatly reduce the attractiveness of the panels by adding nonpolarizing white grids to break up the polarized reflection of light. However, the grids reduced the effectiveness of the solar panels by about 1.8 percent.



THANK YOU!

We want to take this opportunity to once again thank all our valued customers. Whether you are new or a long-time client, we deeply appreciate your business and your referrals. We wish you and yours a healthy, bug-free, and prosperous new year!