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Pest Patrol News

Don't Let Pests Spoil Your Holidays!

Holidays are typically a busy time filled with wonderful treats and indoor gatherings. Our warm indoor environments become beacons to many pests and nothing spoils a good time like finding uninvited creepy crawlies flying or scurrying about. Fortunately our ongoing professional pest services reduce the likelihood of pest attacks. There are also a few things you can do to help.

Stored food attracts many pests, including flour beetles and moths. Bags and boxes that are old, or opened and left to sit, are especially prone to infestation. Rotate your food so that



older containers are consumed first. Don't be tempted to buy large containers of food that are going to sit around for a long time. Be sure to seal well all containers that have been opened, or place the contents in plastic or glass containers.

Insects live in fresh **Christmas trees**, including aphids, spiders, beetles, and various other pests. These pests may have been inactive on the tree, but once they are brought into a warm room, they will start crawling or flying about. Spraying the tree with a strong jet of

water before you bring it indoors is a good way of dislodging pests living there.

Before you bring **firewood** indoors, look it over to make sure pests aren't hiding in it. Like pests in Christmas trees, they'll become active if brought indoors. Shake or sweep them off outside.

Finally, keep a clean **kitchen** and dispose of kitchen garbage regularly to avoid attracting ants, cockroaches, and other hungry pests.

Pest Prevention Tip of the Month

About 23 million U.S. homes are invaded by rodents each winter. Reduce invasions by sealing cracks and holes on the outside of your home, especially where pipes and utility lines penetrate the walls. Inspect cracks under and around all doors, and install or replace weather-stripping.

Rats & Mice Are Invading NOW

Rats and mice spell trouble year-round, but they are especially likely to invade in the fall and winter. Rodents that were living and breeding outdoors are looking for new food sources and protection from the weather, and our homes and businesses become prime targets for invasion.

They can get inside through *amazingly small openings*. If they can get their head through a hole, they can squeeze the rest of their body through as well. Incredibly, a young mouse can easily fit through **a hole smaller than a dime**, and a young rat can squeeze through **a hole smaller than a quarter**.

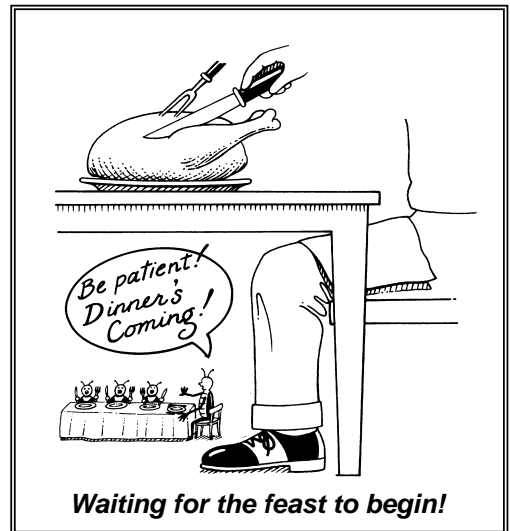
Both mice and rats are astonishingly good climbers, so they do not need to find openings near the ground. They can easily find their way onto roof tops where there may be gaps and openings of



various sizes. Using their keen sense of smell, they sniff to find where air currents escaping from the building are warm, or smell of food, and they will try to enter at these points.

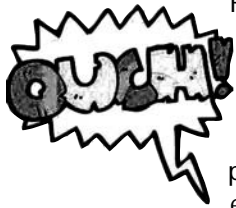
Rats can easily enlarge openings by gnawing their way through building materials. A persistent rat can even gnaw through hard substances like lead, aluminum, and mortar, though their first choice is to gnaw through softer materials. A rat jaw is amazingly strong—able to apply up to 8,000 pounds of pressure per square inch!

You can easily see why rats and mice frequently find their way indoors. Professional control is important because these pests carry diseases, can be difficult to control, and reproduce quickly.



Little Fire Ants

Among ants, here is an especially serious one that has been spreading. The little fire ant is on the list of the world's top 100 nastiest invasive pest species. It is in southern Florida, has been spreading in Hawaii, at times has been battled in California and Texas, and is on world-wide watch lists.



This ant is smaller than the red imported fire ant, but it has a really painful bite, and can cause an extremely itchy rash. The bite is so painful relative to the size of the ant, that some people call it the electric ant.

One of the nastiest things about these ants is that they like spending time up in trees, and when the wind blows, the ants are blown down—often onto people or animals, which the ants then sting. They have been known to sting the eyes of pets, causing them to go blind. In some areas the problem has become so serious that crops can't be harvested. And they become so numerous and eat so many insects and small creatures, good and bad, that these little ants can change an entire ecosystem.

How Effective is Pressure-Treated Wood?

Pressure-treated wood is wood that has had a chemical preservative forced into it, to help prevent it from being destroyed by wood-eating pests and decay fungi. Pressure-treated wood should be used whenever wood touches soil, or is close to soil.



The problem is that over a period of 7-10 years the chemicals slowly leach out of the wood. The outer inch or so of the wood might still be protected, but the inner wood might not be. If there are drill holes or cracks in the wood, or if the wood was cut, it often exposes unprotected wood in the center to pests and fungus decay.

Therefore, whether wood is pressure-treated or not, if it is in direct contact with soil, it will eventually rot and become susceptible to attack by termites and carpenter ants. In the long run, it is best to never let wood touch soil. Consider pressure-treated wood to be "termite-resistant", not "termite-proof."

Man Starts Dangerous Fire



A man at a gas station spotted a spider on his car gas tank and tried to kill it by lighting his cigarette lighter. Of course a blaze erupted almost instantly. The fire burned part of his car and completely destroyed the gas station pump before he was able to douse it with a fire extinguisher. The man was very fortunate to escape serious injury.

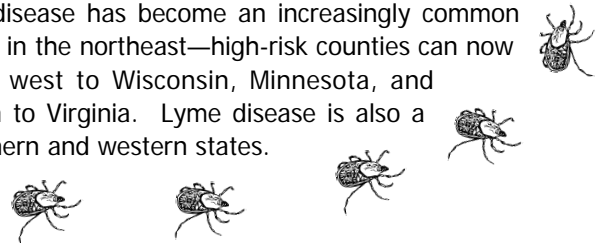
The entire episode was caught on the station's video surveillance camera.

Notable lesson: Don't let the fear of spiders result in dangerous reactions. Burning them is never recommended, especially around flammable gas!

Lyme Disease is on the Move

The Centers for Disease Control (CDC) released a report this year that shows that tick-transmitted Lyme disease has greatly expanded in the last decade. The number of counties in northeastern states where there is a high incidence of Lyme disease has increased more than 320 percent over the last decade.

And Lyme disease has become an increasingly common problem not just in the northeast—high-risk counties can now be found going west to Wisconsin, Minnesota, and Iowa, and south to Virginia. Lyme disease is also a problem in southern and western states.



Cockroaches to the Rescue?

After an earthquake or other disaster, accurately and quickly locating people trapped in rubble can save lives. While specially trained dogs have been invaluable to locate trapped people in many situations, a small cockroach can go places a dog can't.

Researchers are getting closer to being able to accomplish this. A cockroach can be fitted with a GPS locator beacon, plus a tiny microphone allowing the searcher to hear cries for help. A tiny camera can also be attached. Cockroaches are steered remotely by an electric pulse transmitted to their antennae. This is surprisingly effective—the pulse fools cockroaches into "thinking" they have hit an obstacle, allowing a handler to steer them in the direction he wants them to go.



Specially fitted and controlled cockroaches and other creatures are called "biobots", short for "biological robots," and they may someday soon be frequently used to help save lives.

We want to take this opportunity to say "Thank You!" to all of our long-time and new customers. We value your business and many referrals, and appreciate the opportunity to eliminate pest problems, protecting your property and making your lives healthier and better. We wish you all, with your families, Peace, Joy, & Prosperity throughout the New Year!