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## Recent Findings About Cockroaches

Research has brought to light fascinating facts about these common pests.

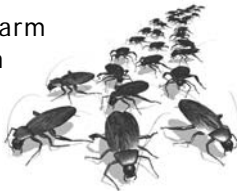
**1. Roaches leave "trails" other roaches follow.** Like ants following a trail other ants have laid down, roaches tend to follow the trail of roach droppings that have accumulated along established paths. Research shows that many roaches, especially young ones, follow these trails rather than trying to locate food, water, and shelter in unmarked areas.

**2. Roaches can invade from sewers.** This isn't news, but recent tests have found that they invade from sewers especially in the spring and summer, when

the sewers in warm climates can have high numbers of roaches.

The cockroaches leave, often moving through or along connecting pipes, and set up residence in and around buildings.

**3. Roaches hate drafts.** People and animals generally don't like air blowing in their faces (of course, dogs love to put their head outside the window). Roaches, it turns out, absolutely can't stand drafts, and will move away from a breezy place, even if it means leaving their favorite dark hiding place. This instinct is so strong, that even with its



head cut off, a puff of air will cause a roach to run.

It's not known exactly why roaches run from a draft. But we do know that a puff of air can tell them that a predator is moving closer to them, so their natural instinct is to run. Also, a breeze dries them out, and they need moisture to survive.

Someday, perhaps, kitchens will be designed with blowers that puff air intermittently throughout the kitchen, leaving these pests with fewer places to hide.

## Have Rats & Mice?

Because of the increased awareness of the potential health dangers of rats and mice, many people have asked us how to determine if they have these pests. It is wise to be on the lookout for rats and mice, especially during the fall and winter when they are looking for shelter in homes.

Of course, if you see these rodents, or their **fresh droppings**, you know without a doubt you have them. But there are other signs of their presence, and everyone should be aware of these. Rats and mice leave **dark smudge marks** (it's oil and dirt from their fur) along their favorite travel routes—on walls, pipes, wires and beams. On dusty surfaces, rats and mice leave **footprints**, or **marks from their tails**.

Other signs include **gnawed materials** with tooth marks, **urine stains** (these fluoresce under UV light),



**nests or caches of food, and rodent odors.** Squeaks and gnawing, clawing, or climbing **sounds** are another sign. **Cats and dogs may get excited** and start probing a certain area of a floor or wall.

People also ask us **how many** rodents there are. In general, just a few signs of rodents means low numbers, or that rodents have only recently invaded. If you see a rodent at night by flashlight, and droppings and gnawings are common, it's likely several rodents are present. And if you see a few rodents at night, and even occasionally during daylight, plus abundant fresh marks, it may indicate a much higher population of rodents—often 10 or more rats, or even more mice.

If you have rodents, give us a call to control them professionally.

### THANK YOU!

To all of our longtime and new customers, we want to say "Thank you!" for your valued business, and for the many times you have referred others to us this year! Helping to protect your property and health is our continuing pleasure.

We wish each of you joy, health, and success throughout the New Year!

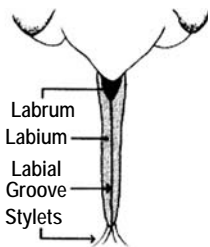


An extra pair of hands really helps when getting ready for a big night out!

## Overwintering Bugs Can Damage Plumbing

Both chewing termites and rodents have caused leaks in flexible PVC tubing (also called Spa Hose), the kind used in pools and spas. But now a different kind of insect-caused damage is also showing up in PEX tubing, a flexible plastic tubing used in plumbing and radiant heating.

The leaking in this tubing is not because it has been chewed on, but from microscopic holes. It was recently discovered that these holes can be caused by certain overwintering insects that randomly puncture the plastic with their sharp, needle-like mouthparts. Some insects have surprisingly strong piercing mouthparts—some of them puncture hard seed shells to feed on the nutritious seed inside—which is why they are able to puncture plastic tubing. Common pests that have these types of mouthparts include *boxelder bugs*, *stink bugs*, and *western conifer seed bugs*, a fall-invading insect that has been spreading to new areas around the country.



PIERCING-SUCKING MOUTHPARTS

## New Ant Species are Spreading

Research shows that most of the worst ant pests are not natives—they were accidentally introduced into this country. Non-native ants eventually can become very serious pest problems because they have competitive advantages (such as having many queens in each colony, allowing the colony to grow and spread faster) and because many arrive here without their natural enemies.



An alarming new study has calculated that there are three times more non-native ant species in our country than what has already been discovered. Many new ant species may not have been discovered because they haven't spread far yet, or because they look very similar to known species.

This means that although ants are already the pest that people most often encounter, in the coming years even more different kinds of ants will be invading homes and businesses. Effective ant control will require even more training and experience and become even more complex—a challenge we are up to!

Research shows that besides becoming new indoor pests, new invading ant species also disrupt our natural ecosystems, decreasing populations of our native animals and plants. Since pest management professionals, like our company, are often the first ones who spot new pest species, we have an important role in protecting our ecosystems. This is in addition to working to protect the health and property of our valued customers.

## New Car Wiring is Tasty to Rodents

Automakers have switched to a new biodegradable wiring insulation in recent years. It's great for the environment, because it doesn't last forever in landfills, but it is soy-based and appears more likely to be chewed up by mice, rats, and squirrels. Sometimes these pests even use bits of the wiring insulation to build their nests somewhere on or around the engine.

Replacing pest-damaged wiring can be very expensive, usually costing hundreds of dollars. The rodents may just chew the insulation, or they may chew all the way through the wire. In either case, the wiring is damaged and will need to be replaced. If you see evidence of rodent activity in your garage, or around your home, contact us to control them before they cause damage.

Gnawing rodents also can damage wiring in homes and other buildings. According to the National Fire Protection Association, fire departments responded to 46,500 home structure fires that involved electrical failure or malfunction in 2010. These fires have many causes, of which rodent damage to wiring is one major factor. Rodents are not to be ignored!



## BUGS IN THE NEWS!

A new study of vanity license plates (custom plates) in Iowa showed that people use a lot of insect-related names for their custom license plates. There were 608 license plates with the word "bug" in them, 336 with the word "bee", 294 with "ant", 265 with "fly", and many other insect names. Included are fun names like ABUG8ME, I8ABUG, BUGYOU, and N2BUGS. (If you can't figure these out, the answers are below.)



There was also a yellow and black Chevrolet Camaro with BMBULBE on the license plate, named after the Autobot scout known as Bumblebee in the Transformer movies. Plus, BEEMEUP, for a Star Trek fan, and a strange license plate, FLYNPIG.

(Answers: 'a bug ate me', 'I ate a bug', 'bugging you', and 'into bugs'.)

Black Portuguese millipedes are being blamed for a recent rear-end train crash in Australia. The creatures can become so numerous at times, that when squished on the tracks by a train, they turn into a slippery mess that makes it difficult to stop the train. Six passengers were treated for neck injuries. A similar millipede-caused train wreck happened in 2009.

Vicious Asian giant hornets have killed at least 42 people in China this year, and sent another 1,600 people to hospitals for treatment. It is not known why there have been so many attacks this year, except that the fall weather has been warmer and drier than normal, so colonies became larger than usual.