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Summer Stinging Pests

Stinging pests are out in force during summer, and if we get on the wrong side of them, they will make us regret it—"OUCH!"

These pests have developed stings to defend themselves or their colony, and those stings are meant to hurt and make us want to 'head for the hills'—fast! Even worse, some people have severe allergic reactions to stings, making even a single sting life-threatening if not treated immediately.

It was once thought that only about one in 250 people have severe allergic reactions to stinging pests. But more



recent studies, using skin tests with bee and wasp venom, indicate that up to 4% of the population has allergic reactions. In

fact, over 100 Americans die every year from severe allergic reactions to insect stings.

More die from yellowjackets than any other pest. Many of those who die had never experienced an allergic sting reaction before.

People who aren't allergic to insect venom can still die if stung enough times,

which can happen when a nest is disturbed. Left untreated, kidney failure can occur within hours or days after receiving more than 150 bee stings or 20 wasp stings. But when properly and quickly treated, even victims stung over 1,000 times have survived.

Stinging pests include bees, wasps, yellowjackets, hornets, and various ants, as well as scorpions, centipedes, spiders and others. If you are experiencing problems with any of these pests, give us a call to control them.

Ants Are Invading

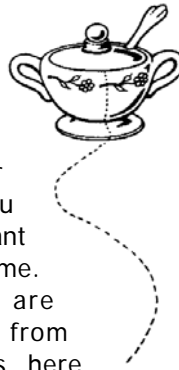
Ant problems both indoors and outdoors are common this time of year, and these problems will continue well into fall. Not only are ant colonies huge this time of year (ant colonies may double in size by late summer), but there are more ant colonies now than there were in the spring.

The natural outdoor food supply for ants also starts to decrease in late summer and fall. The combination of more and bigger ant colonies and less food causes more ants to invade homes, looking for food. Another factor that drives ants indoors is the weather—some kinds of ants are looking for a better place to move their colony. Indoors is much more protected from weather extremes. You can imagine the problems they cause when an entire ant colony moves indoors.

If you or someone you know has ants, give us a call and we will make your

ant problems a thing of the past! If you already have our regular treatments, you probably have not had ant problems for a long time. Still, because ants are constantly reinvading from surrounding properties, here are a few wise things even our regular customers should do to help reduce the possibility of ant invasions:

- ♦ Keep food spills and crumbs cleaned up, and make sure all indoor and outdoor garbage cans have tight-fitting lids.
- ♦ Trim tree and shrub branches so they do not touch buildings and act as a bridge for ants.
- ♦ Eliminate sources of water, such as leaky faucets and roof leaks, because water is important to ants.



Pest Prevention Tip of the Month

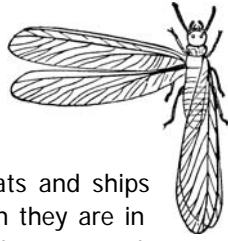
Fungus gnats are common tiny flies. You will see them flying around potted plants, and they are attracted to windows and lights. Their larvae thrive in the soil of overwatered houseplants. You can often control these flies by watering potted plants less often, allowing the soil to dry out between waterings.



A flea looks over her to-do list.

Formosan Termite Swarming

The Formosan subterranean termite is especially damaging to wood, and it is spreading in the United States. One of the ways these termites get started in an area is from boats and ships that pick up these hitchhikers when they are in infested areas, or take on infested cargo, and then dock on our shores. When the winged reproductive termites swarm from the boats, they take to the air and land in nearby shore areas, where they start new colonies. Winged termites eventually swarm from these colonies, spreading the infestation further every year.



It has not been known exactly how far these winged Formosan termites spread. One new study in New Orleans found that the majority of them landed within 273 yards of their parent colony. But one winged termite was caught a whopping 1422 yards away, or almost a mile. It was not windy during the study, but on windy days they would probably land even further away.

New Breathalyzer Test for Malaria

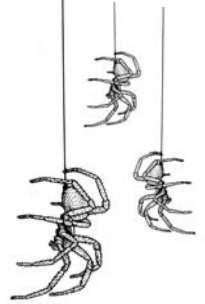
New research shows that the breath of patients infected with malaria has much higher levels of certain compounds in it than people not infected with malaria. What is exciting about this discovery is that these chemicals are present at very early stages of infection, before other methods can even detect that the malaria parasites are present.

The compounds are too low for humans to smell, and up until now they have been detected only by very expensive laboratory equipment. However, the researchers are working on developing cheap 'biosensors' that could be used to test breath for malaria.

Malaria is transmitted by mosquitoes, and most people think of it as a disease primarily of tropical or subtropical areas of the world. But as recently as the 1930's there were **six to seven million** malaria cases annually in the United States. There are still up to 2,000 cases here a year, but they are almost all in people who traveled to other countries where malaria is common, especially India and Africa. However, because certain species of our local mosquitoes can become infected when they bite an infected person, there is a constant risk of malaria being reintroduced into the United States.

'Spider Rain' Reported

In an event that received world-wide coverage a few months ago, the sky was filled with millions of spiders and their silky threads in New South Wales, Australia. The spiders floated around and then down, landing in everything, even in people's hair and beards. This occasional phenomenon is called a 'spider rain' because of the huge numbers of spiders involved, and although the spiders are typically not poisonous, it can cause a real panic.

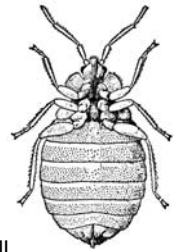


Young spiders often float up into the sky on silken threads, a dispersal method called *ballooning*. Ballooning happens all around us from spring through fall, but it seldom gets noticed.

It is thought that conditions have to be just right for a spider rain: large numbers of spiders need to hatch and be ready to balloon, but weather conditions somehow hold them back. Then the weather changes, it is perfect ballooning weather, and lots of spiders become airborne. Once they are airborne the weather shifts again, sending the spiders back to earth in a short time. It is still not well understood how shifts in weather contribute to a spider rain.

How Long Do Bedbugs Live?

Although bedbugs are problems year-round, the warmer months from July to September are peak bedbug months, when these pests are multiplying faster and are more active and noticeable. Under ideal laboratory conditions bedbugs live an average of 6-12 months, although in the real world their average lifespan is probably shorter.



However, we have heard some people say they are going to "wait out" a bedbug infestation, hoping it will die out on its own if they simply take an extended vacation. This doesn't work. While young bedbugs will die after a few weeks without a blood meal, adult and larger nymph bedbugs somehow seem to survive without a blood meal for a very long time. They have been shown to survive very well for over a year without feeding. Amazing!

So please be wary of used furniture, especially beds, bedside tables, couches, etc. that may have bedbugs hidden in them. Bedbug infestations don't go away—they need to be professionally treated to eliminate the pests.

Why Lyme Disease is Difficult to Treat



New research shows that the bacterium that causes Lyme disease forms dormant persister cells. These cells are known to evade antibiotics, and may explain why Lyme disease is so difficult to treat in some patients. If caught early, patients treated with antibiotics usually recover quickly. But about 10 to 20 percent of patients, mostly those who have been diagnosed and treated with antibiotics after the disease is well established, continue to have persistent and recurring symptoms after treatment.

Lyme disease affects 300,000 people annually in the United States, according to the Centers for Disease Control.