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Pest Patrol News

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The Plentiful Pests of Summer

In summertime the pests are abundant—multiplying like crazy as the weather warms. Here are some of the many summer pests that can become problems.



Stinging and Biting Pests: Bees, wasps, hornets, yellowjackets, scorpions, and certain ants and spiders pack stings that can be painful and even dangerous. Other pests suck our blood, usually without us knowing it while it is happening. These include fleas, ticks, mosquitoes, biting gnats and flies, and others. Bed bugs are nightmarish blood-suckers that have returned with a vengeance, after being free of them for decades.

Food Contaminating Pests: Stored food moths and beetles find their way into many foods we keep for ourselves or our pets. Cockroaches, ants, flies, rats and mice can be problems anywhere food is stored, cooked, or served—and often throughout our homes. Watch your pet food to make sure you aren't feeding bugs or other creatures at night.

Fabric Damaging Pests: Clothes moths and carpet beetles favor wool, but also damage other fabrics. Silverfish, crickets and other pests will occasionally damage fabrics as well as papers.

Wood Destroying Pests: Termites, carpenter ants, carpenter bees, powderpost beetles, and decay fungi all eat wood for food, and carpenter ants chew into wood to create space for their expanding colonies. Either way, these pests cause serious damage.

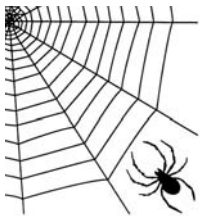
Occasional Invaders: Hundreds of different pests may invade a home occasionally, and just be a nuisance and clean-up problem, or even cause allergic reactions.

With our professional services, you can enjoy a great, *pest-free* summer!

Pest Prevention Tip of the Month

Watch your pet food. Ants, cockroaches, other insects, plus rodents and other wild animals may all be feeding on pet food if you leave it outside overnight. Also store bags and boxes of pet food and bird seed in sealed containers. Use up the food first that you've had the longest, to prevent flour moths and beetles from multiplying in it.

Spider Questions



Here are three common questions people ask us about spiders.

How do spiders re-infest an area?

Spiders eventually re-infest a treated area. Many young, light-weight spiders travel through the air by a process called "ballooning." They simply let out one or more silk lines that easily catch even a mild wind or thermal current, and they drift up and away. When they are this small, if they land on a window screen they can crawl right through it.

Larger and heavier spiders (like jumping spiders and tarantulas) can't balloon even when they are young, but they do crawl around quite a lot looking for prey. Many kinds crawl into the cracks and openings in the exterior of a home, and from there eventually find their way

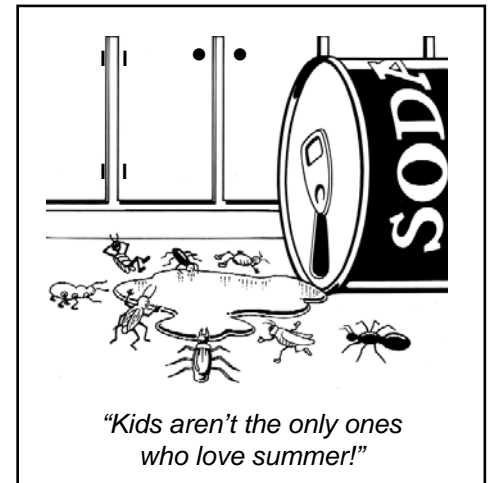
indoors.

Is it good to have spiders around because they prey on other pests?

Spiders eat only a tiny percentage of the insects in and around a building—not enough to control a pest problem. On the contrary, if spiders wiped out all insects around them, they would starve. Spiders are valuable in nature, just not in and around our homes!

Where do those dust-laden cobwebs come from?

Spiders keep their webs clean, so when you see dusty webs, it means the spiders are dead or simply have abandoned that web, and the spider is no longer there to clean off the dust. Some cobwebs also come from young spiders ballooning and spreading, or spiders using a strand of silk as a "dragline", to let themselves down to a lower point in a room.



"Kids aren't the only ones who love summer!"



New Tick-Transmitted Diseases

While Lyme disease is the most common tick-transmitted disease, with 30,000 reported cases a year, ticks continue to be in the news because of the other viruses they transmit.

A Kansas man died last year from **Bourbon virus**, a new virus named after Bourbon County where he lived. He was a healthy man who died after only 10 days in the hospital. At this point it is not known for certain how he contracted the disease, but this kind of virus is usually transmitted by a bite from a tick or other insect. The Bourbon virus is similar to viruses found in other parts of the world, but nothing like it has been seen in this country before.

The **Powassan virus** occurs from Virginia up to Maine, and east to Minnesota. This is a tick-borne encephalitis virus that is low in numbers, but has been increasing in recent years.

The new **Heartland virus** infected two men in Missouri in 2009. While they fortunately recovered, the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention anticipates that more people will become infected. The virus is transmitted by lone star ticks.

Finally, besides sometimes transmitting diseases, bites from some lone star ticks are causing another problem—making some people **allergic to red meat**. Unlike most food allergies, the symptoms, including vomiting, abdominal cramps, hives, and anaphylaxis, typically come three to six hours after an infected person eats red meat. The only good news is that the allergic reaction seems to fade after a few years if people avoid additional tick bites.

True Amphibious Insects Discovered

There is always a new and exciting discovery in the insect world!

In Hawaii's freshwater streams, 14 new species of amphibious caterpillars have been found. While many insect larvae live in streams and lakes, these are the first truly amphibious insects (they are equally at home in water or on land) that have ever been discovered, anywhere in the world.

It is still not understood how the caterpillars, which grow to be small moths, can breathe under water. A clue may be that they only live in fast-moving streams. The water in these streams have high oxygen levels, so somehow they may be absorbing oxygen by a process not yet understood.



Allergists: A Pest-Free Home is Important



A survey of 500 allergists showed that an overwhelming 97% think that a pest-free home is an important step in preventing asthma and allergy symptoms. The survey of medical professionals was conducted by the *Asthma and Allergy Foundation of America*.

Many common household pests, including cockroaches and rodents, can trigger allergic reactions in certain people. Using our professional services to prevent pest problems is a simple way to help avoid pest-related allergies.



Invasion of 8-Foot Lizards

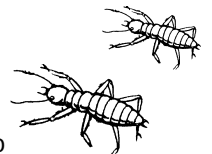
The Nile monitor, a lizard native to Africa, has been thriving and spreading in various areas of Florida since about 1990. The giant lizard sometimes grows up to 8 feet long. It will eat anything it can catch

that is smaller than itself, including pets and wild animals.

How did this giant get started in Florida? Some people keep Nile monitors as pets and eventually may end up letting them free in the wild because either they have grown too large to keep, or they require too much food. The problem with releasing exotic pets is that when they get hungry they may become very efficient at finding and eating native animals and birds and their young. Some of these are key native creatures that may be on endangered lists, so they can cause a lot of havoc to an ecosystem.

Don't let pets loose into the wild—like the Nile monitor and many other exotic pets, they may multiply and become serious pests!

Hybrid "Super" Termites Discovered



Scientists were shocked recently to find that two different species of very destructive termites are mating in the wild. *Formosan subterranean termites* are mating with *Asian subterranean termites* in South Florida. Currently these hybrid colonies are only in South Florida, because while Formosan termites have spread to 11 states, Asian termites have invaded more recently, and so far are only in Hawaii and parts of South Florida.

The scientists have also discovered that the resulting colonies appear to be even more destructive than their parents, primarily because some of these "hybrid" colonies are growing in size twice as fast as their parent colonies.

"Hybrid vigor" is well known, because it happens sometimes when two plant varieties combine. Hybrid vigor means that the resulting offspring are in some ways superior to either variety. Unfortunately, that is what is happening with the termites—the colonies become larger, faster. With animals, two species normally can't produce fertile offspring. (For example, the mule, a cross between a donkey and a horse, is sterile.) It is still not known if these hybrid termite colonies will be able to reproduce.

But even if a colony can't reproduce itself, the sheer numbers of termites in a hybrid colony can be incredibly destructive. It is expected that these hybrid colonies will contain a million termites after five years or so—that's a very short time to grow so large. It is a case of "hybrid vigor" at its worst.