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SEPT/OCTOBER 2015

Pest Patrol News

Fall Invasions Starting

Fall is a surprisingly busy time for pests. A wide variety of pests start invading homes, looking for a place to spend the fall and winter.

Their instincts tell them it's time to search for a dry, warm crevice or cavity. They are searching for loose bark to get under, or a hallowed out tree trunk, a wood or rock pile, or an old animal burrow. Unfortunately, our homes and other buildings often look to pests exactly like what they are searching for. They will crawl deep into cracks and holes in our foundations, walls and roofs, and around the edges of loose-fitting doors and windows. They are *very persistent* in searching until they find a crack or other



opening to crawl into.

What happens next makes the problem *ten times worse*. As it gradually gets colder outside, and even on warmer days, the invaders crawl deeper into the home. It's not only warmer indoors with central heating, but the room lights makes them think it's spring and time to crawl towards the light and warmth. Eventually they pop out into our living

areas and begin crawling or flying about—sometimes in large numbers.

Common pests that invade in the fall include the new *stink bugs*, *Asian lady beetles*, and *seed bugs*, assorted *flies*, *beetles*, *ants*, *wasp queens*, and *clover mites*. Bigger pests like *mice*, *rats*, and other *animals* also invade in the fall, seeking a warm, dry place with food.

Some fall invaders stink, stain, or sting, and some are just extremely annoying, causing problems for many months. Call us in late summer or early fall to schedule our special preventative treatments, and save yourself the trouble of serious problems with fall invaders.

On-Going Service Protects Best

Why is regular, on-going professional pest management service so important? Some pests multiply more slowly this time of year, but others take their place and are even more active now. On-going service provides the best protection against the constantly changing invaders, and is your best value.

Rats and mice will be especially troublesome during the months ahead. Each year over **23 million** households in the U.S. fight winter rodent infestations. These pests have been outdoors multiplying and eating during the warmer months, and now are looking for warmer, drier shelter. Homes and garages provide needed shelter, and food and moisture as well.

Mice and rats don't just eat and contaminate your food, they can transmit

diseases, are a source of allergens, and can chew through wiring and insulation, which causes further damage and occasional fires.

Many other pests continue to multiply and cause damage indoors, including ants, cockroaches, fabric pests, stored food pests, fleas, spiders, and others. You may even inadvertently carry home some of these pests in shopping bags and boxes.

On-going service can catch all these problems early, preventing expensive pest damage and making your home safer and more comfortable. Another great benefit of having fewer pests, plus their damage and droppings, is that cleaning and maintaining a home is easier! We all can use that during the busy holiday season ahead.

Pest Prevention Tip of the Month

Don't inadvertently bring pests indoors! Check furniture, food, grocery bags, boxes, rolled up newspapers, luggage, and other items you carry in. Also check potted plants you bring in. There may be ant colonies in the soil, pests underneath the pot, and pests on leaves.



Drones May Be Used in War on Diseases

The number of potential uses for drones is being expanded. Special drones are being developed to aid in the war against mosquito-borne diseases. These drones



would fly mosquito-catching traps into remote areas, then the drones would pick up the traps and bring them in. New technology is being developed to more quickly analyze the mosquitoes for dangerous disease-causing viruses. In this way it may be possible to predict when an outbreak of a mosquito-transmitted viral disease is likely.

Early warning that diseases are on the move means extra steps could be taken to control the mosquitoes, and to warn people to take extra precautions to protect themselves from being bitten.

This new endeavor, called *Project Premonition*, was launched by Microsoft. To work, more efficient mosquito traps will need to be developed, as well as better molecular screening for viruses such as dengue fever, yellow fever, avian flu, and emerging viral diseases.

Care for a Scorpion Vodka?



Looking for some unusual foods? An online Thai company is offering specialty foods that feature insects. Care for a vodka with a scorpion, centipede, or tarantula in it? They've got it. While it sounds crazy for most of us Westerners, alcohol that contains herbs or various bugs or snakes are commonly used in Thailand for medicinal purposes.

The website, *Thailandunique.com*, also has packets of hard-to-get items like cricket flour (can be used in place of regular flour in baking), chocolate covered scorpions, insect candy, and even canned tarantulas, in case you are cooking up something really special.

New Honey Bee Findings



We all want to do whatever we can to protect our pollinators—especially honey bees. Honey bees have been hit with a number of problems over the last decade, and entire task forces of scientists have been trying to figure out what has been killing them. This has been difficult to determine, partly because there are a number of fairly new, or spreading, pests of honey bees. The worst pest in honey bee hives is the tiny *Varroa mite*, but honey bees have been hit with other mites and a variety of fungal and other diseases that kill them as well.

On top of all that, it was thought that certain pesticides might be affecting honey bee colonies, but researchers have found that these pesticides by themselves are probably not as important to colony decline as once thought. It has also been discovered that even solar storms (sunspots) on the sun affect bees because it changes the earth's magnetic fields. When these fields change, bees have trouble finding their way back to their hives because honey bees (and other insects and animals) use earth's magnetic fields to navigate with.

Here's one bit of good news about the *Varroa* mites that are deadly to honey bees. Wild honey bee colonies have been discovered near Ithaca, New York, that are resistant to the mite. The mite also doesn't affect Africanized honey bees. It's possible that eventually we can breed honey bees that aren't affected by this spreading pest.



Cockroach Allergens May Increase Glaucoma Risk

Exposure to cockroaches and cats may increase the risk for glaucoma, new research shows.

People with glaucoma had significantly higher levels of immunoglobulin E, a type of allergic antibody, compared to people without glaucoma. The tests showed that it is specifically cockroach and cat allergens that increased the probability of glaucoma—there was no increase of risk with dog allergens. These findings raise the possibility that the immune system plays a role in glaucoma. The study was published in the *American Journal of Ophthalmology*.

Head Lice News



With children going back to school, outbreaks of head lice in schools are more likely. The best control for this pest is using an over-the-counter head louse shampoo or lotion, plus combing the hair with a louse comb—a fine-toothed comb that hair passes through, but not lice eggs (nits) and lice.

Unfortunately, research just released in August has confirmed what scientists (and parents) have been finding recently—that many lice populations are resistant to the common insecticides in louse lotions and shampoos—pyrethrins and permethrin. Although you can start with these products and they may still work (especially when combining the treatment with using a louse comb), they have been used so much that they are not as effective as they once were. Always follow label directions exactly.

Fortunately, more effective products (ivermectin, spinosad, and benzyl alcohol) are available, but only through a doctor's prescription.

Remember, head-to-head contact with an infested person is the most common way to get head lice. But a person can also become infested by sharing combs, coats, etc. that have been used by an infested person within the last couple days, and by lying on a bed or pillow that has recently been used by an infested person.