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## Those Busy Ants

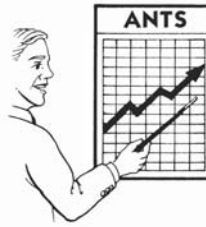
Around the country, problem ants, often originally from other countries, continue to invade new areas.

*Crazy ants, trap jaw ants, white-footed ants, fire ants, Argentine ants, and Pharaoh ants* are just a few of the many ant species that are gradually spreading. These and other prolific ant species are one of the reasons ants have become our *nation's #1 pest*. Because unprotected homes experience repeated and persistent ant invasions each year, new clients call more often to control invading ants than any other pest.

Ant colonies are humming with activity at this time of year! There is an

abundance of food, and colonies are growing in numbers, with queen ants laying dozens of eggs day in and out. At various times ants wander indoors, searching for food, moisture, or a better nesting site. If they find what they are looking for, expect more ants to follow—often hundreds or even thousands of ants within an hour of the original discovery.

Outdoors, an abundant food eaten by many kinds of ants is honeydew.



What is *honeydew*? It is a sugary substance excreted by aphids, whiteflies, and many other plant-sucking insects. Ants love honeydew so much that some species actually tend and protect the aphids and other pests that produce it, and will even carry aphids to new plants.

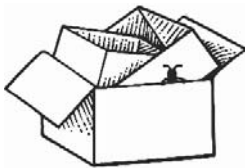
Ants are pests that almost continually try to invade a home, and require professional treatments to keep them out. If you or someone you know is having problems with ants, call us—we are the *area ant experts!*

### Pest Prevention Tip of the Month

Outdoor lights attract large numbers of pests to homes this time of year. Consider changing the bulbs on these lights (see the back of this newsletter for more on this), placing lights on motion detectors, and/or moving lights further away from your home. Lights further away, even when they shine on a wall or entrance, actually draw pests away from the home.

## Are Pests Hitching A Ride with You?

Pests through the ages have been very successful at hitching rides with us. In fact, most of the worst pests people unknowingly brought with them from somewhere else in the world. Today these pests are just as adept at catching a ride with us, whether we are on an everyday *shopping trip, eating out, at the movies or gym, on an overnight trip, or when moving* to a new home or apartment. Here are a few of the pests that frequently hitch a ride home with people or pets.



**Flour moths** and **beetles** are brought home from the grocery store hidden in bags and boxes of food. Plus they hide in everything from toys filled with beans, to tobacco products. **Silverfish** are easily moved around in cardboard boxes and used items.

**Clothes moths** and **carpet beetles** feed while hidden in woolen rugs and other items made of animal origin such as leather, furs, and silk. Entire **ant nests** are brought indoors in the soil of potted plants. And our pets pick up **fleas** and **ticks** wherever they go, and then carry them into our homes.

The fact that so many pests are so good at coming home with us is another reason that our *regular* professional pest services are so important.

**Cockroaches** and **bed bugs** are among the most easily transported pests. Both of these pests are commonly transported to your home from infested restaurants and other public places where people sit, plus motels, moving vans, and used furniture stores. Cockroaches also arrive in bags or boxes.



## Choosing Outdoor Light Bulbs



All year, but especially during the summer, outdoor lights attract millions of flying and crawling pests, as well as spiders, ants, and other pests that come to feast on whatever the lights draw in. A recent study compared outdoor residential lights in Virginia and found that some bulb types attracted far more pests than other bulbs. The standard incandescent bulb attracted the most pests, followed by CFL, halogen, cool color LED and an incandescent yellow “bug” light. *The warm color LED bulb attracted the fewest pests of all the bulbs*, so this would be a good choice for outdoor lighting. (A warm color LED bulb has a higher Kelvin rating than a cool color LED).

Up until now the yellow “bug” light has been the recommended choice for outdoor lighting situations, but many people don’t like the yellow color of the light. This study also found another disadvantage of yellow “bug” lights—they attracted more earwigs (“pincer bugs”) than all the other light bulbs, and more true bugs (such as stink bugs) than the warm LED bulb.

## Cockroaches Cause Breakups



A recent survey of female homeowners found that *one quarter* would stop dating someone whose home had even one cockroach. Surprisingly, three percent said they had already quit a relationship after seeing a critter!

To put this in perspective, fewer would consider conflicting political views (17%), terrible style (13%), or a lack of a college degree (7%) to be worthy of a breakup.

Interestingly, the same survey found that many people consider *spiders scarier than zombies!* The majority of homeowners (69%) said it would be more terrifying to spend the night in a house filled with spiders than to encounter a zombie. This might be a totally unfair comparison, because spiders are real, and zombies are imaginary and only look real in movies. Then again, movies like *Arachnophobia* with houses filled with spiders really are scary!

## Roach Infested Apartment EXPLODES!

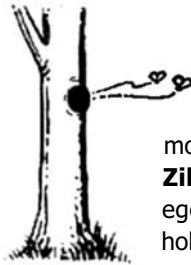
A cockroach-infested apartment exploded recently in New Jersey. It happened when the occupant, who was untrained and was using a household insecticide to try to kill cockroaches, began to experience a headache and opened a window. According to the firemen who responded, the explosion happened when the build-up of trapped indoor fumes, combined with the additional oxygen from outside, was ignited by the stove pilot light.



The two adults and toddler that lived in the apartment were taken to a hospital and unfortunately had no home to return to. But ironically the firemen who were called to the scene could still see live cockroaches crawling about!

Folks, this kind of damage happens all the time. *Please leave pest control to a trained professional*; this never happens with the products we use and the safety precautions we employ.

## Fill Tree Holes



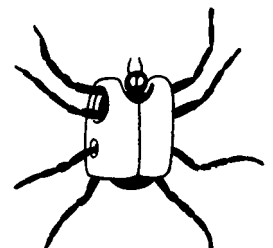
Some people are surprised to learn that tree holes are a common place where mosquitoes breed. Not all mosquitoes like tree holes, but unfortunately the species of mosquitoes in this country that are potential transmitters of the **Zika virus** are among those mosquitoes that love to lay their eggs in places where there is very little water. So filling tree holes has become even more important as a way to reduce the numbers of mosquitoes that can bite you, and potentially transmit mosquito-borne viruses, including Zika.

Holes in trees are left when trees are injured in any way—often when a tree limb rots out or falls off. When it rains some of these cavities fill up with water, and they may hold water for a week or much longer. This is long enough for mosquito larvae to hatch and develop into adult, biting mosquitoes—a process that takes as little as four days in hot weather, or up to two weeks in cooler weather.

There are several ways to fill a tree hole, but in most situations arborists have stopped recommending concrete (which is heavy and causes other problems), or gravel or sand (both of which hold water and promote decay). Expanding foam is being used more these days—you can smooth off the excess foam after it dries. If rats or mice are in the area, some kind of screening or other excluding materials can be added to prevent these pests from chewing into the foam. It is not necessary to clean out the wood decay before filling the cavity.

## Spiders Can Sail On Water

When young spiders let out a silken thread and are carried away by the wind (called “ballooning”), they may land anywhere, including on water. Surprisingly, new research shows that many spiders are quite good sailors on water, whether it is salt or fresh water. Some even raise their legs so they act as sails, and let out a silken thread to stop or slow themselves down, as a kind of anchor.



This shows how versatile spiders are at spreading and infesting new areas, and eventually reinvading areas where they have been controlled.