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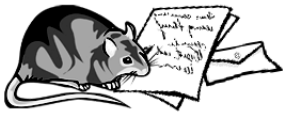


DEBIT & CREDIT

JAN/FEBRUARY 2019

Pest Patrol News

Pest Control Urban Myths



An c i e n t
G r e e k s
were convinced
that the way to
get rid of mice
in their homes

was to **write a letter to the rodents**. These letters were usually fairly polite and straight-forward—they ask the rodents to leave, but specific threats were added if they didn't move out.

While we now laugh at such a futile attempt to rid a home of rats and mice—someone should have told the letter-writers that rodents can't read, or reason—there are countless urban myths

about pest control today that are equally ineffective but presented as true—just look on the internet. Here is a sampling.

Control moles and gophers by placing **Wrigley's Juicy Fruit gum in their burrows**. Really? The idea is that the rodents eat the gum, which then 'gums up' their insides, causing them to die of constipation. Good revenge, but unfortunately it doesn't work.

Corn grits kills ants. Supposedly, if you put out some corn grits, fire ants will eat them, and the grits will expand and cause the ants to burst.

Another recommendation states that supplying **carbonated soft drinks** to

mice will cause them to bloat up to the point of exploding.

Another recommendation is to **mix 50% plaster of paris**, or Portland cement, **with rat food**. It is suppose to kill rodents by hardening their intestines!

All of these have been tested by scientists and found to be totally useless. Yet to this very day, you can find terrible recommendations like these still on the internet. Please, don't be like the ancient Greeks and try writing a letter to the mice in your home, and don't believe everything you read or hear!

Signs of a Rodent Infestation

Often you never actually see a rat or mouse, so it is important to learn the signs that tell you rodents have invaded your home or business.

Many people first know of a rodent invasion because they see mouse or rat **droppings**. These pests also leave urine stains that you don't notice in regular light but fluoresce under UV light.

Hearing strange sounds—such as squeaks, gnawing, clawing, or climbing sounds. Cats and dogs will also hear them, and bark or pay special attention to a certain area of a floor or wall.

Finding nests, or caches of food, in a dark, secluded spot.

Rub marks—their fur is oily, so they leave smudge marks that gradually get darker along their favorite routes.

On dusty surfaces, they leave **footprints**, or marks from their tails.

Gnawed materials—rodents will chew through wood, plastic, and even lead pipes to obtain food or water, or reach better shelter.

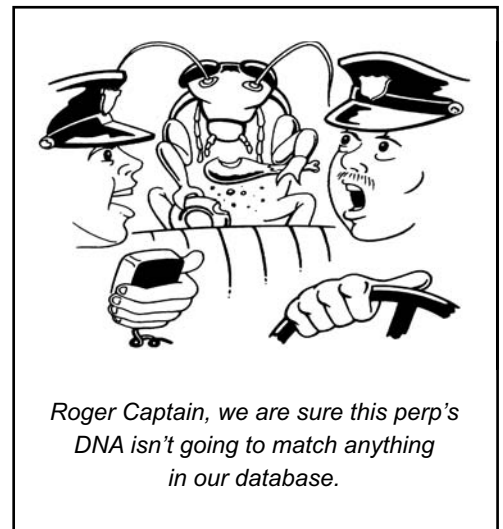


If you see any of these signs of rodents, give us a call to control them professionally.

Why is control of these pests so important? Rodents not only carry and spread diseases, they can cause allergies, they bring fleas, mites, and ticks indoors, and they eat and contaminate stored food. Besides the health concerns from mice and rats, these pests also create holes in walls, usually widening small holes or gaps that are already there, and gnaw on electrical wires, which can cause a house fire. Increasingly, they are getting under the hood of cars and gnawing on electrical wires or flexible tubing there, causing some very expensive damage.

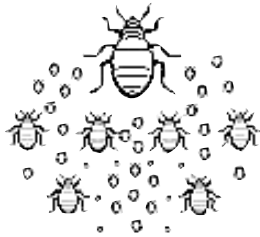
Pest Prevention Tip of the Month

Both pet food and water left out overnight invite trouble with pests, so remove it nightly. Racoons, rats, mice, and many insect pests such as cockroaches and ants eat pet food, and will return nightly for another feast.



Roger Captain, we are sure this perp's DNA isn't going to match anything in our database.

Bed Bug Population Growth



Many people want to know—how fast does a bed bug population grow? There are many factors that affect this, including the amount of food (human blood, unfortunately!) available to the bugs, temperature, and the availability of suitable hiding places.

It is difficult to study population growth under real life conditions, so these studies are generally done in the laboratory. In one study, **two bed bugs, a male and a female, multiplied to become 300 bed bugs in just 15 weeks.** In another study, bed bugs went from egg to adult in about 35 days. Because bed bugs lay so many eggs, **the population DOUBLED in size every 13 days!**

Fire Ant Venom is More Potent During Rafting



When an area with fire ant colonies gets flooded, the workers gather the queen, eggs, larvae, and pupae, grab onto each other, and form a 'raft' of ants that floats in the water. The rafts float downstream, or where ever the wind blows, with workers on the outside. Eventually they find dry ground, and can dig a new nest in five or six hours.

It is during this time of rafting that the ants are especially vulnerable. It was long thought that the bites were more painful while the ants were in rafts, and it has been shown that indeed they are—tests have shown their bites are **eighty seven percent more painful**, to be precise.

That's why when a raft containing hundreds or thousands of fire ants bumps into a person, it is particularly dangerous. The stings are especially painful, and if the floating ant raft bumps against a rescue boat, they will quickly climb over the sides of the boat, and multiple ants will start biting any person or animal they contact.

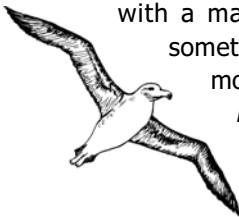
Mice Threaten Birds on Marion Island

Mice invaded Marion Island, escaping from seal-hunting ships that visited the island in the early 1800's. They quickly multiplied and spread over the 129 square mile island. The island is home to *28 species of seabirds*, including many kinds of unusual albatrosses.

It was always thought by conservationists that the mice were not an important threat to the bird life there. However, in 2003 it was discovered that mice were burrowing into the nests of albatrosses and feeding on the defenseless chicks. In 2009, the first mouse 'scalplings' were detected—*the mice were actually eating the scalp of the still-living chicks.* These gruesome attacks were captured on film in 2015, and it was found that the attacks were occurring all around the island, and seem to be increasing.

What makes this particularly sad is that the parent birds are not accustomed to the danger from mice, and are defenseless against these attacks. They seem stunned, and usually simply watch the attack happen. The parents are also often gone from the nest, looking for food, leaving the chicks completely unguarded.

Marion Island, which is southeast of South Africa, has now been targeted with a massive baiting program to eradicate the mice, starting sometime possibly in 2020. Mice have been eradicated from more than 70 islands worldwide, but Marion Island will be the *largest island* so far where eradication is attempted. It will be an expensive effort, and the baiting phase will take 1-2 months, but based on experience with other islands, researchers are confident the mice can be eradicated and the gruesome bird deaths can be stopped.



Tracking Kissing Bugs with Radio Transmitters

Kissing bugs got their name because they often bite a sleeping person around the mouth or eyes. There are eleven species of this insect in the southern half of the U.S. They can transmit **Chagas disease** when they suck a person's blood; a disease which sometimes causes congestive heart failure. The Centers for Disease Control estimates that *300,000* people in the U.S. are infected with the Chagas disease parasite, and most don't know it.



Kissing bugs hide in cracks and holes in beds, furniture, walls, and floors in the daytime, and come out at night looking for a blood meal. Because not a lot is known about where they hide and how far they travel for a blood meal, researchers recently captured 11 kissing bugs and attached tiny radio transmitters to their backs. This had never been done before.

Over a 12-day period, the distance the bugs traveled averaged 12.5 feet, and one kissing bug traveled 66 feet. Dogs are a common blood source for these pests, and one of the blood-suckers was found well-hidden inside a small slit of a doghouse. It shows how difficult these bugs are to find, because it would have been nearly impossible to find it without the radio transmitter attached to it.