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Pest Patrol News

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Ants: Home Invaders



problem in the U.S. The problem is so bad that an *unprotected* home can be expected to have ant problems at least occasionally. For some homes, ant problems are a continual battle.

This is because ants are continually searching for food, water, and places for their nests. Ant colonies are constantly sending out scouts into homes to find these resources. These scouts usually go

Homeowners have more problems with ants than any other pest, making ants the **#1 pest**

unnoticed by humans until the scouts finds food or something else they are looking for, and then hordes of ants start coming in.

Ant colonies start to come alive and pulsate with activity during the spring. Nature provides an abundance of food in the spring, and each queen ant starts to lay more and more eggs every day. To make matters worse, most of our most serious ant pest species have many egg-laying queens in each colony, so these colonies can grow and become more of a menace with each passing week.

You can't control these huge monster colonies by killing only the ants you see—

there are just too many ants that you don't see. *Like an iceberg, where the vast majority of the ice is hidden from view, the ants we see feeding are just a small number compared to the number hidden in the nests.*

Our regular and professional control eliminates ant problems and prevents new ant problems from arising. We are the *local ant experts*—please spread the word and let other people know we can help them!

Pest Prevention Tip of the Month

Tall grass and weeds are a favorite place for rodents, insects, and other pests to hide and breed. Eventually some of these pests will find their way indoors. Keep grassy areas trimmed low, especially near your foundation.

Watch out for Swarming Termites

WHAT THEY ARE: Swarmers are the winged reproductive members of termite and ant colonies. They are not strong flyers. Most land within a block or two of where they emerged, although they can be blown by the wind much further. After landing, they lose their wings, pair up, and then begin searching for a suitable place to start a new colony.

TIMING: the exact time when termites swarm varies year to year depending on weather, but sometime soon winged termites will start emerging from their nests in large numbers. Most swarmers will emerge after a rain as temperatures begin to warm. A colony may send them out in one big burst, or in smaller numbers over several weeks. And each colony may vary a little as to when they send them out. For instance, if a colony is in a warmer

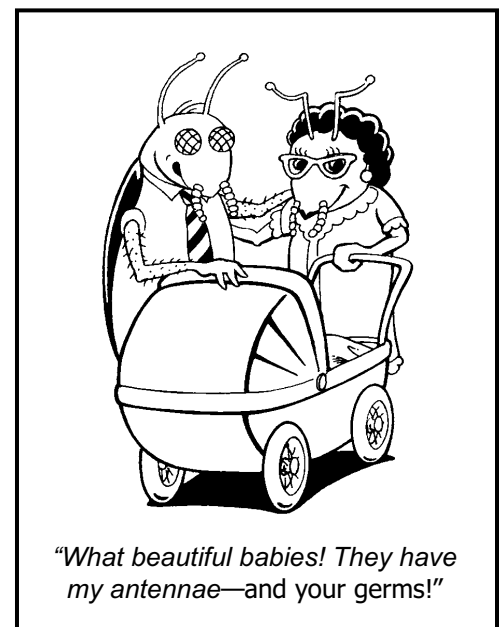
spot, such as near a heater, it may send out swarmers weeks or even months before a colony located outdoors in a cooler area.



THEIR SIGNIFICANCE:

A termite colony does not start producing swarmers usually until its 4th year or later, so finding swarmers indicates the colony is already mature and has been around for a while. But sometimes part of a mature colony moves into a home and starts producing swarmers much sooner.

One or two swarmers may fly in through an open door or window, but if you find more than that indoors or on a porch, it is a sign you probably have a problem. You need to call us right away for an inspection, and to determine what should be done to prevent these wood-eating pests from feasting on your home.



"What beautiful babies! They have my antennae—and your germs!"

Your Questions Answered

Q Who is most likely to get head lice?

A Head lice are equal opportunists—they will attack you regardless of whether your hair is dirty or clean, short or long, or whether you are rich, poor, young, or old.



Children contract head lice more often than adults simply because their play often involves direct head-to-head contact, and they share personal items like combs, brushes, and coats.

NOTE: Head lice is an age-old problem. Even in 16th Century Germany, a document on proper manners advised, "Never scratch your head, or fish out lice when you are having a meal." Recorded by a predecessor of Miss Manners?

Home Has One Million Africanized "Killer" Bees

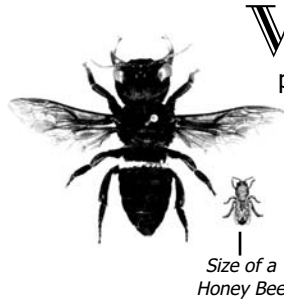
Two colonies of Africanized "killer" honey bees were removed from the walls of a Houston home, totaling over one million bees.

The huge hives had been there 10 to 20 years, and the combs measured an amazing 12 feet tall and 3 feet thick in places. It took the pest management hero more than 8 hours to remove them, and he sustained over 40 stings.

Africanized honey bees have a heightened defensive behavior, making them more dangerous than our European honey bees. It takes much less of a disturbance to cause them to attack, they attack in much larger numbers, they pursue the unlucky intruder much further, and they keep attacking for a longer period.

Africanized honey bees are unfortunately spreading in warmer areas of the country. These bees are now established in Texas, Arizona, Nevada, New Mexico, southern California, and Florida. They gradually out-compete our more "gentle" European honey bees.

World's Largest Bee Rediscovered



Size of a Honey Bee

Wallace's giant bee, first discovered in 1859 on three remote islands in Indonesia, has been a particularly elusive bee. Long thought extinct, it was not seen again until 1984, 125 years later. Now for the first time a film crew has filmed it alive in the wild.

At 1.5 inches long, and with a wingspan of 2.5 inches, Wallace's giant bee dwarfs other bees. It has a distinctive sound made by its wings, a "deep, slow thrum that you could almost feel as well as hear."

Wallace's is a solitary bee with the unusual habit of living in termite nests. We don't know what its sting is like because no one has been stung by one, so far. It fortunately appears not to be aggressive.

Formosan Termites Discovered in California

Everyone believed that the invasive Formosan subterranean termite had been eliminated in California. Discovered near San Diego in 1992, due to aggressive control efforts it was last seen there in 1998. Now a new infestation has been discovered less than half a mile from the original discovery.

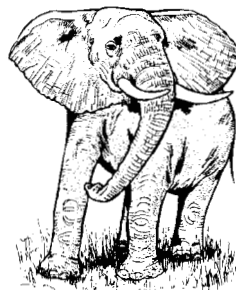


A "robust" colony was found in the structure of a home after the homeowner reported to a termite company that they had a cloud of winged insects swarming in their yard at twilight. It turned out these were mature Formosan termites seeking mates, ready to fly off and start new colonies. The colony appears to be 6 to 8 years old.

The termites had hollowed out large areas of structural wood, always staying just beneath the exterior paint, keeping themselves unnoticed by the homeowner.

It is believed these termites were unknowingly originally brought to California by a family who lived there but visited Hawaii often and brought back plants and other items. Formosan termites invaded Hawaii in the 1800's, and are currently spreading across the Gulf, from Texas to Florida, and up to North Carolina.

Ants Are Mightier than Elephants



Here's a case where tiny insects change the behavior of animals about a billion times more massive than they. Researchers have discovered that African elephants won't eat foliage of trees that have ants on them—they will even avoid their favorite tree species. Elephants avoid any trees with ants because the angry ants crawl up inside the elephant's sensitive trunks and sting them.

The ants have no effect on tree-feeding giraffes, because these animals use their long tongues to swipe the ants away from their short snouts.