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MAY/SUMMER 2019

Pest Patrol News

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Summer Indoor Pests

Pests are **oh so abundant** in the summer, and especially target unprotected homes. Once indoors, here are the health problems these invaders cause, and what they damage:

People and pets: A wide variety of pests cause us and our pets bodily harm by stinging, biting, sucking up our blood (yuck!), spreading diseases or causing allergies indoors. Some of the most common of these indoor pests are *ants, cockroaches, spiders, flies, fleas, and bed bugs.*

Our food: *Ants, flies, cockroaches,*

and rats and mice not only contaminate our homes, but also eat and contaminate our food. These pests also eat food we put out for our pets. *Flour beetles, meal moths,* and others commonly infest and contaminate stored human and pet foods.



Fabrics & paper: *Clothes moths and carpet beetles* are the most common pests that eat holes in our fabrics. *Silverfish and crickets* damage fabrics and paper.

Our homes: *Termites, carpenter ants,* and other pests attack the wood in our homes. Other pests leave stains or

messes of droppings, cast skins, and insect bodies. Some of this debris can trigger allergies, especially when there are a lot of pests involved, so it is a good idea to keep pests controlled. Other pests damage electronic devices, cause house fires, etc.

About those Fall Invaders: Many pests invade unprotected homes in August and September, looking for a place to spend the winter. *Stink bugs, cluster flies, Asian lady beetles, elm leaf beetles, and conifer bugs* are just a few of the many pests that invade in the fall and cause problems.

Wasps & Yellowjackets—OUCH!



Yellowjackets, hornets, and various wasps are all social insects. Unfortunately, that doesn't mean they are friendly or social to people! They can act downright unfriendly, and when they feel their colony is threatened, they present a real danger because large numbers of them can attack and sting any intruder.

So called "paper wasps" are generally the least aggressive of these wasps. Their nests have cells exposed, rather than having a single entrance into the nest. The nests are dome or umbrella-shaped, and there are typically fewer than 250 workers in a nest.

Yellowjackets, hornets and other wasps build much larger nests that can house thousands of wasps, and they have a single entrance to the nest. In some areas nests can be over 6 feet high, contain 45 levels of combs, and have 20,000 or more adult wasps. Whether a

nest is small or large, these wasps will aggressively defend their colonies.

There are a few things you can do to help prevent wasps from becoming a problem:

- Pick up all ripe fruit under trees and dispose of them, and keep garbage cans clean and closed so wasps won't be attracted to your yard.
- Screen and weather-strip doors, windows, and vents, and caulk cracks in outside walls, to keep them and their nests outside.
- Fill old rodent burrows, and remove hollow trees and other nesting sites from your yard.

If you have a yellowjacket or wasp nest in your yard, or even a paper wasp nest that is close to a doorway or path, call us to treat it safely and effectively, before an unlucky person or pet gets stung.

Pest Prevention Tip of the Month

Ivy may look good growing up the side of a home, but it damages the surface it attaches to, holds in moisture, and harbors pests like wasps, ants, and even mice. Keep ivy and other vines off your walls. Even better, keep these plants trimmed back so they are five feet from the foundation.



Even this is an easy job for my pest professional.

Why Does a Zebra Have Stripes?



It has long been debated if there is an advantage to a zebra having stripes. At times it has been thought that the stripes visually confuse predators, provide better camouflage, act as a signal to other zebras, or help control heat gain. *But none of these hypotheses have proven true.*

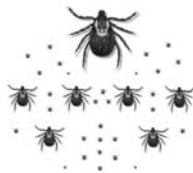
New research shows that stripes greatly reduce bites from horse flies that suck up blood and transmit diseases.

When researchers draped a striped cloth coat over a horse, they discovered that they were bitten less often. At a distance, flies were attracted to striped and uniform coats equally, but videos showed that when the flies were closer to the animal they didn't slow down if it had stripes. In fact they were flying in so fast that they couldn't land, and often bumped into the animal before flying off again. The stripes somehow confused the flies enough that they couldn't land properly more than 75% of the time.

Maybe we'll see more people wearing zebra stripe outfits when horse flies are biting!

Tracking Ticks

The Centers for Disease Control (CDC) is starting a new program to more thoroughly monitor the nation's tick population



and the diseases the ticks are carrying. This will give us a better idea of where different species of ticks are, disease organisms they are carrying, and new areas the ticks and diseases are spreading to.

The CDC is taking this step because the number of serious diseases acquired through ticks, fleas, and mosquitoes has *more than doubled* over the past few decades, with ticks causing the majority of disease cases. In fact, the number of cases of tick-borne diseases *increased by about 250%* between 2004 and 2016, according to the CDC.

Besides the number of tick-borne disease cases increasing, ticks are spreading to new areas, and new types of tick-borne diseases are being discovered.

Your Questions Answered

Q: What is the proper way to remove a tick?



A: April-September is peak tick season. It is important to remove ticks as soon as possible. This needs to be done properly so that no tick mouth parts break off and remain in your skin.

The best way is to use a blunt pair of forceps, grasp the tick as close to the skin as possible, and remove it with a steady pull. Do not crush or squeeze the tick as you pull because it may regurgitate, increasing the chance of infection. After you have removed the tick, wash the bite site and your hands with soap and water.

Scientists tested some popular folk remedies to remove American dog ticks from sheep. They tried covering ticks with petroleum jelly, nail polish, and rubbing alcohol, and touching ticks with a match that had just been extinguished. **None** of these popular methods promoted on some internet sites worked very well.

Brown Marmorated Stink Bug News

These pests have gotten a reputation of being able to crawl through any size opening into a home. So what is the true minimum size gap that they can't get through?



New research shows that most can't get through holes that are 7 millimeters (about 0.3 inches) wide, or smaller. But because stink bug bodies are flattened, they can get through even smaller slits—a slit opening must be tiny—only 3 millimeters (about 0.1 inch) high, or smaller, to keep them out.

Dangerous Pests on Planes



When the movie *Snakes on a Plane* came out, it caused quite a stir. In the movie, poisonous snakes were unleashed in an attempt to eliminate a key witness on his way to a trial. In real life, while *Snakes on a Plane* made for an adrenaline-packed

story, there are other more common, serious pests that make professional pest control on planes essential.

One big concern for airlines is *rats* and *mice*, especially because these pests like to gnaw on things. Large airplanes have over one million parts, plus miles of wires and cables. The wires are well-protected against many threats, but a persistent rodent can get into tight places and gnaw on a wire, easily causing something to fail. That's why sighting a rat or a mouse causes the plane to be grounded.

Planes traveling through other countries can also pick up stowaway pests that pose health hazards. *Mosquitoes* carrying dengue and other diseases can fly into the plane, *fruit flies* and *cockroaches* can hide in food carts, luggage can be a source of pests, and people can also bring in blood-sucking *bed bugs*, *lice*, and *ticks*. Even *scorpions* have been found on planes recently.

Fortunately, poisonous snakes are rarely encountered on planes, but airlines have had to develop strict pest management procedures to deal with these other serious but more common pests.