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FALL 2020

Pest Patrol News

Fall-Invading Pests are Plentiful



Fall marks a gradual change in the weather, causing changes in pest problems as well. Certain pests, driven by instinct, begin looking for a more protected place to spend the winter. *Unfortunately, homes and other buildings are especially appealing to many of these fall invaders.* Often these pests slowly move deeper indoors during the fall and winter months, attracted to the warmth and lights inside, and then "spill out" into interior rooms many months later.

Some common fall invaders:

•**Asian lady beetles**—Lady beetles are normally a beneficial insect, but this new species is highly attracted to homes in the fall. They leave orange-colored stains and may cause allergies for some people.

•**Stink bugs**—These new invaders have been spreading, so watch for them. They smell horrible and often invade in large numbers.

•**Rats and mice**—Some may already have found their way indoors, but during the fall they begin searching more aggressively for ways to get inside your home.

•**Ants**—populations have been growing, and some kinds become aggressive invaders in the fall, either

looking for food or moving their entire colonies indoors.

•**Cluster flies and face flies**—These sometimes enter homes in large numbers in late summer and early fall.

Many other pests invade in the fall such as **cockroaches, crickets, millipedes, elm leaf beetles, boxelder bugs, western conifer beetles, overwintering wasp queens, and wild animals.**

During the critical months ahead our professional pest management services provide vital protection. We are here to safeguard you, your pets, your home and belongings from health risks and other damage caused by pests.

Reducing Allergen Exposure

Over 50 million people in this country suffer from allergies. The proteins, or allergens, that trigger allergic reactions come from a wide variety of sources, but it is estimated that *at least 10 to 15 million people are allergic to cockroaches.* Cockroach allergens come from saliva, feces, and carcasses. These allergens can be at levels high enough to cause allergic reactions wherever cockroaches are or recently have been, including homes, workplaces, schools, and restaurants.



pest allergen levels are greatly reduced where there is regular professional pest control service. By preventing pest problems, or stopping them from escalating, our on-going services greatly reduce pest allergen levels, creating a healthier home environment.

Regular and thorough cleaning is also crucial in reducing allergen levels, both from pests and from other sources. If you have family members who are particularly sensitive, we recommend that you vacuum with a HEPA filter to reduce the number of particles scattered into the air during vacuuming. Regular dusting also helps reduce allergen levels; wiping dust from children's toys with a damp cloth is always a good idea.

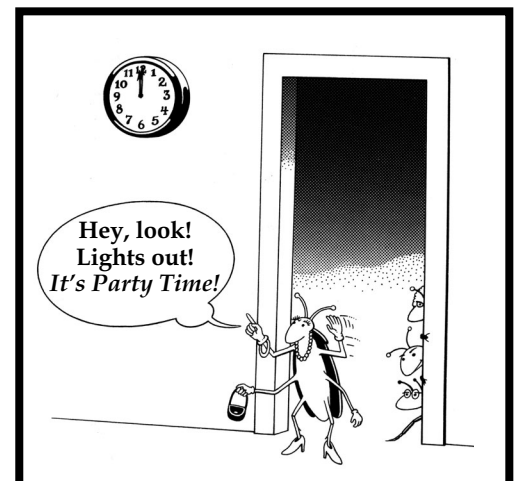
Reducing allergen levels requires professional pest control and regular cleaning. Together, we can make your home a more wholesome place to live in!

Although *cockroaches* are the most common source of pest-caused allergies, many other pests are known to cause allergic reactions. *Mice, fleas, Asian lady beetles, mites, and caterpillars* can all trigger allergic reactions in susceptible people. In fact, allergens from over 100 species of insects and mice have been recorded in house dust.

The **good news** is that studies show

Pest Prevention Tip of the Month

Make sure there are no gaps in the weather-stripping around all your house and garage doors. Old or torn seals create cracks and holes that pests use to enter a home. This, along with our regular treatments, will help keep pests out that are looking for ways to invade your home.



Murder Hornets Update



Earlier this year we reported on the first Asian Giant Hornets being found in the United States, in Washington state near the Canadian border. These are the world's largest hornets, with workers about 1½ long and even bigger queens over 2 inches long. While their sting is more dangerous than other bees and wasps, they are sometimes called "murder hornets" because of the havoc they cause to bee hives. They can kill and eat an entire honey bee colony in a matter of hours.

These hornets were first discovered in British Columbia, Canada, last year, and later in Whatcom County, Washington, just south of the border. A huge trapping and eradication program is now underway in Whatcom County to try to find the nest or nests and eradicate them. As of this writing at the end of August, several hornets have been trapped (plus one discovered dead in a road), but the hunt is still underway for their nests. Hopefully the nest or nests will be discovered and destroyed by mid-September, before the colony begins creating new queens that will start more colonies.

Bug Bombs Ineffective Against Bed Bugs



Total-release foggers, the type you can buy in stores to fog a room, do not work to control bed bugs, according to a study in the *Journal of Economic Entomology*. These foggers had little, if any, effect on the bed bugs. Apparently the fog is not able to penetrate cracks and crevices where bed bugs hide.

The study warns that bug bombs and foggers are not just a waste of money. More importantly, homeowners using them mistakenly think they will control their bed bug problem. This causes homeowners to delay getting effective treatment by a professional pest management company, allowing the bed bugs to spread and become an even worse hazard.

Rodents Infesting Cars



Rodents nesting under the hood of cars and other vehicles, and sometimes chewing on engine wires and hoses, have always been a problem. But this situation became much worse when car manufacturers a few years ago switched to use more biodegradable materials, which happened to be soy-

based. It was found that increasing numbers of vehicles were in the shop for repairs because rats and mice were chewing on wire insulation and hoses that used these materials, resulting in repair bills of sometimes thousands of dollars. And most car insurance doesn't cover this!

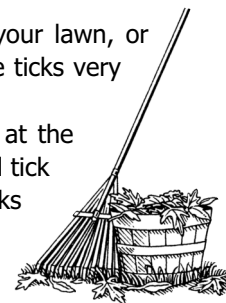
Even if manufacturers fix this problem, be aware that rats and mice will always be attracted to warm engines, as well as vehicles parked and unused for long periods, and will still do damage there because they are "chewers" by nature. They also chew on upholstery and other items inside vehicles. *Because of this, our rodent control is always important.*

Vehicles parked outdoors are especially at risk because of *rodents exploring the neighborhood*. Don't leave food or water in your car or in your garage that rodents can get to. Eliminate extra trash and clutter in and around your vehicles—rats and mice use this to hide in and for nesting material. Seal your garage to eliminate openings rodents can crawl through.

Raking Right Reduces Tick Encounters

You've just raked or blown the leaves to the edge of your lawn, or maybe just over into the woods. But you've just made ticks very happy!

A recent study in New Jersey showed that leaves piled at the wooded edge of lawns create an ideal habitat for blacklegged tick nymphs. In fact, there was a **three-fold increase** in ticks where this was done. Deeper depths of fallen leaves are ideal places for ticks to live because of the higher humidity there, and better protection from harsh winter conditions.



This may be true for accumulations of lawn clippings and pruning debris as well, but the test only looked at leaves in the fall.

To avoid creating these ideal tick habitats the new advice is to completely remove leaves and other plant debris—take advantage of curbside pickup. If that can't be done, put them in an actively managed compost pile where they will decompose quickly. If that can't be done, remove them to an area well away from the high use areas of a yard—well away from lawns, places where children play, and outdoor seating areas.

Constrictor Snakes Respond to Heartbeats

Snakes like boa constrictors that squeeze their prey to death *can detect the heartbeat of their prey*. If the heart continues to beat, they constrict longer and exert more pressure until it stops beating. A boa will squeeze a rat, for instance, for about 12 minutes. But they will squeeze dead rats that have a simulated heartbeat for 22 minutes—and at more than twice the pressure.

Since prey can't turn off their heartbeat, this is a reliable way for a snake to know when their prey is dead so they can stop squeezing.