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FALL 2021

Pest Patrol News

Fall Invasions Starting

Fall is a surprisingly busy time for pests. A wide variety of pests start invading homes, looking for a place to spend the fall and winter.

Their instincts tell them it's time to search for a dry, warm crevice or cavity. They are searching for loose bark to get under, or a hollowed out tree trunk, a wood or rock pile, or an old animal burrow. Unfortunately, our homes and other buildings often look to pests exactly like what they are searching for. They will crawl deep into cracks and holes in our foundations, walls and roofs, and around the edges of loose-fitting doors and windows. They are *very persistent* in searching until they find a crack or other opening to crawl into.



What happens next makes the problem *ten times worse*. As it gradually gets colder outside, the invaders crawl deeper into the home. It's not only warmer indoors with central heating, but the room lights makes them think it's spring and time to crawl towards the light and warmth. Eventually they pop out into our living areas and begin crawling or flying about—sometimes in large numbers.

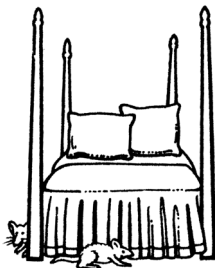
Common pests that invade in the fall include the new *stink bugs*, *Asian lady beetles*, and *seed bugs*, plus all kinds of *flies*, *bugs*, *beetles*, *ants*, *wasp queens*, and *clover mites*. Bigger pests like *mice*, *rats*, and other *animals* also invade now, seeking a warm, dry place with food.

Some fall invaders stink, stain, or sting, and some are just extremely annoying, causing problems for many months. Call us in late summer or early fall if you are not already scheduled for a fall treatment, and save yourself the trouble of serious problems with fall invaders.

Pest Prevention Tip of the Month

Little Mice = BIG TROUBLE

It's surprising how **little mice** can equal **big trouble!** We'll be seeing lots of this trouble during the months ahead. The fall and early winter is when mice (as well as rats) start looking for a warm place to spend the winter. Most homes and businesses provide not only warm and dry shelter, but also food for these invading rodents.



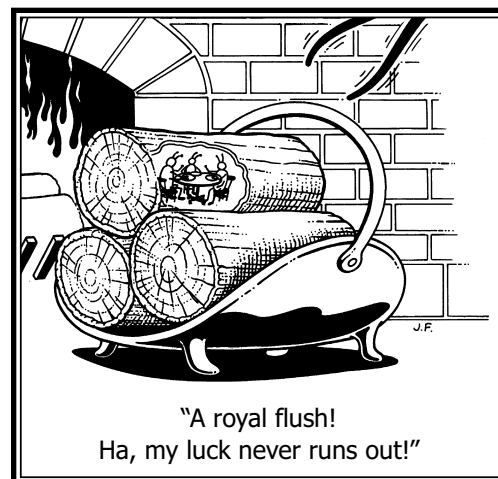
Mouse populations can quickly grow in size. With adequate food, water, and nesting sites, a single female mouse can produce as many as 50 mice in a single year! They are also incredibly adaptable to different temperatures—in a chamber kept at below freezing (24° F), wild mice are able to survive and even reproduce.

Mice easily gain entry into most

homes and other buildings. Most can squeeze through a crack as small as ¼ inch in diameter, which is the size of a full-grown mouse skull. If they can get their small head through the hole, the rest of their body will slide through.

Once a mouse has found a way indoors, other mice may use the same entryway. This happens because a mouse leaves a trail of body secretions and urine, and other mice simply follow that trail. Openings in the exterior of a home should be repaired, caulked, or plugged to slow down this parade of invading mice. It is also important to store food properly so mice can't get into it.

Get rid of all water sitting in plant saucers, plugged rain gutters, and anywhere else in your yard. Not only can mosquitoes breed in these, but rodents and other animal pests will come and drink from them. Mosquitoes can breed in bird baths—change the water weekly to prevent mosquito larvae from becoming adults.



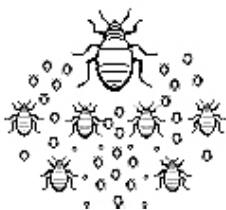
New Murder Hornet Nest Found



The first Asian giant hornet nest was discovered this year in August, in **Blaine, Washington**. These large hornets are common in eastern and southeast Asia. In Japan they kill up to *50 people a year*. They also can wipe out an entire honey bee colony in a few hours, as they feed on the adults and larvae. The workers have massive, $\frac{1}{4}$ inch long stingers. Queens of these hornets can exceed 2 inches in length and have a 3 inch wingspan.

First discovered in the U.S. in Washington in 2019, there has been a massive effort to detect and control the giant hornet nests before the insects spread. They found this nest by capturing live hornets nearby and putting tiny trackers on the workers, that then flew back to the nest.

Histamine in Bed Bug Poop Lingers



Bed bug poop contains high levels of the chemical histamine, which can trigger allergy symptoms in people. Histamine is the scent in bed bug poop that tells other bed bugs that this is a good place to aggregate—blood meals are nearby.

Scientists recently discovered the histamine in bedbug poop stays behind long after the bugs are controlled. When dust was collected from bed bug-infested apartments after they were controlled, it was discovered that the histamine levels were **22 times higher** than dust from bed bug-free apartments. This was true an astonishing 3 months after all the bed bugs were killed. This shows bed bug poop can continue to cause problems after the bed bugs are controlled; a very thorough cleaning is needed.

**Today's Chuckle: Time flies like an arrow.
Fruit flies like a banana.**

Stan Lee on the Origin of Spider-Man



Stan Lee, the inventor of Spider-Man, told a class in 2017 this inspiring story of how the idea came up. He saw a fly on a wall and thought about the powers that went along with that ability. He went through a variety of names of what a person who had this ability would be named, until he happened upon Spider-Man.

He was told it was a terrible idea because people hate spiders, but he went forward with the idea anyway, to great success. Steve Ditko went on to develop the Spider-Man character.

Stan Lee used this story to illustrate this point: don't let some naysayer talk you out of a great idea. Obviously not every wild notion you come up with is going to work, but you can only do your best work if you're doing what you want to do. *Good story!*

Bed Bugs Pestered Ancients

Bed bugs were making nights miserable for Egyptians almost 3,500 years ago! Dead bed bugs were excavated from an ancient village at **Tell el Amarna**, a city inhabited for only 15 years and associated with **King Akhenaten**, father of the famous boy-king **Tutankhamun**. The specimens are the oldest known bed bugs.



Ancient people used various pesticides to help rid themselves of pests. An Egyptian papyrus from 1500 BC lists recipes to kill fleas. And at Tell el Amarna, they spread ash around the base of grinding mills to protect flour from beetles and moths.

New Drones Fight Rats on Islands



The *Polynesian rat* was introduced to Tetiaroa island near Tahiti around 1,000 years ago. The common *black rat* arrived there in the 1970's, about the time of the filming of *Mutiny on the Bounty*.

Without natural predators, rats multiply and can affect entire ecosystems. There are now somewhere between 28,000 and 65,000 rats on the small, 193 acre island. Like rats on other islands, they feast on the eggs of native birds, turtles, and other animals. Rats have caused a number of animals to go extinct around the world. *It is estimated that 75% of all bird, mammal, and amphibian extinctions occur on islands, and rats and other invasive species are the primary cause.*

Even in situations where rats don't cause the extinction of birds, they greatly reduce bird populations. This causes another problem only recently discovered—islands with large seabird populations have much healthier coral reefs around them due to the higher nutrient levels (poop) the birds bring with them.

A previous attempt to rid Tetiaroa of rats in 2012 failed. This year they will try again, switching from more expensive helicopters to using large drones to drop poison bait. These new, large drones can hold a payload of 110 pounds. The Island Conservation group in charge of the project is working as fast as they can to clean out rats on islands, before more native species go extinct.