



PEST MANAGEMENT



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JULY/AUGUST 2018

The Pest Bulletin

Ants Are Moving In

As ant experts, we notice interesting things about ants. For instance, they are no respecter of property—they invade homes of all sizes equally, and they infest every neighborhood. They are so common a problem that they are the #1 pest listed in Gallup polls. You can be sure that every day, ants are either invading your home, or trying to.

The first ants that crawl into a home are the "scouts" looking for food, water, or a nesting place. Once they find what they are looking for, they go back to their colony, laying down a scent trail as they go so other ants can more quickly find

their way. Depending on the ant species, they may prefer sweets, or proteins like meat and grease. Many ants eat both, but they often switch their food preferences from day to day.



Whenever possible, never provide ants food and water. Clean up crumbs, grease, and liquid spills. Place opened food in the refrigerator or in sealed containers. Use garbage bags, or regularly rinse out your indoor and

outdoor garbage containers.

Some ant species would like to move their entire colony indoors. They may nest in the oddest places, but favorite areas are behind walls and baseboards, beneath floors, in the soil of potted plants, and in other hidden areas.

As the area ant experts, we effectively control these common and persistent invaders. If you know someone who suffers from these pests, please tell them about our professional and courteous services!

Biting & Stinging Pests of Summer

Biting and stinging pests are out in force this summer. While some of these pest stings are "just" painful or itchy, others can be more serious, and dangerous to our family and pets.

Biting pests see people as "fast food". Most are very efficient at sucking out our blood, including mosquitoes, ticks, fleas, lice, bed bugs, chiggers, conenose bugs, biting flies, and no-see-ums. In most cases it's not our loss of blood that causes the most concern—it's what these pests can transmit directly into our blood stream that is much more dangerous. These include hundreds of organisms that cause everything from Lyme disease, to West Nile and Zika. Plus, the chemicals in the insect saliva causes us itching and swelling that is especially unpleasant.



Stinging pests, including bees, all kinds of wasps, and some ants, usually sting because they perceive us as a threat to themselves or their colony. Most of these pests inflict a lot of pain—it's their way of saying, "Leave us alone, or else..."

We get the message instantly when we yell "OUCH!"

But these pests can deliver much more than just a painful sting. The real danger is a mass attack—being stung over 200 times can be fatal, although in some cases victims with over 1,000 bee stings have survived with proper medical treatment. However, just on sting, if not treated quickly, can be deadly for up to 4% of our population that is hypersensitive to these stings.

Also watch this summer for stings from other kinds of venomous pests, such as spiders, centipedes, and scorpions!

Pest Prevention Tip of the Month

Check your window screens and repair or replace them as needed. For very loose screens that pests can crawl around, install weather-stripping along one or more edge to tighten them. If doors tend to be left open, install screen doors that automatically close.



Biggest Island Yet Declared Rat-Free



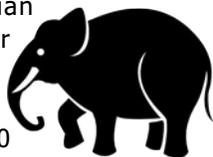
It took nearly a decade, over 13 million dollars, and more than 300 tons of rat bait, but South Georgia Island has finally been declared completely free of rats and mice! This is the largest rodent eradication effort in history. The island is 103 miles long and 269,000 acres, or *eight times larger* than the largest island where rats were eradicated previously. It is criss-crossed by huge glaciers, which create isolated areas that could be baited separately.

Rats and mice came to this island in the southern Atlantic Ocean in the 18th century, escaping from sealing and whaling ships. Without any predators, rodents multiplied rapidly, feeding on seabird eggs and young seabirds that were in nests on the ground. They decimated populations of over 30 species of sea birds that nest on the island. Two species of birds that are found nowhere else were close to extinction from the rodents eating them.

Fortunately, many of these seabirds are already starting to make a comeback. The success of this project gives hope that conservation plans to eradicate rats and mice on larger islands may succeed.

Trains Hit Elephants. Can Bees Help?

India has lots of wild Asian elephants, and every year some of these magnificent animals are killed by trains hitting them. In the last 30 years, about 266 elephants have been killed by trains, and many more have been wounded. A combination of more trains, faster trains, and a larger elephant population has meant that the problem is getting worse.



Several solutions are being tried in an effort to keep elephants away from railway tracks. In one area in India, railway officials have installed devices that loudly broadcast the buzz of swarming honeybees. They hope the sound will keep elephants away because they fear the insects. Some farmers use real beehives to help keep elephants away from their crops.

Myth Exposed!

Q I have heard that wearing strong perfumes and brightly colored clothing increases my chances of getting stung. Is this true?

A Although it may sound logical, and you can find this advice on the internet, there is no evidence that what you wear has any impact on your chance of being stung by bees or wasps.



Most stings occur when you disturb a nest, step barefoot on a bee or wasp, press against one with your body, or are outdoors and drink from a glass where an insect is drinking the same liquid. In all these cases, the clothes you wear or the aroma you exude will not affect the outcome of the encounter!

Bees and wasps sting only when defending their colony, or their own life. They are not going to sting you because you look or smell like a giant flower, and they are not going to mistake you for a pretty petunia and besiege you. Bees and wasps aren't so easily confused.

Mosquito Blood Meals



During a two year period in Baltimore, most of the mosquitoes trapped were either Asian tiger mosquitoes that transmit West Nile, Zika, encephalitis, and dengue fever, or Culex mosquitoes that transmit West Nile virus.

A DNA analysis of the blood in engorged female mosquitoes found that, surprisingly, rats were the most common meal of the Asian tiger mosquito, and they were the second most common meal of Culex mosquitoes, after birds. Humans and cats were next in meal frequency, and a smaller amount of blood was taken from deer and dogs.

The researchers believe the mosquitoes were feeding on whatever was available and easiest to bite. It is amazing that rats are so numerous, that they would be the primary meal of Asian tiger mosquitoes in the city.

Researchers also found that the amount of blood mosquitoes sucked from humans differed in various areas of the city. Where people spent more time in their backyards, and their yards had shade, moisture, and lots of plants where mosquitoes were more abundant, more blood was coming from people than animals.

LED Bulbs & Insects

While most LED light bulbs are less attractive than standard incandescent light bulbs, some LEDs do attract insects. If you are using a light bulb outside, or where it will be seen from outdoors, such as through a window, keep the following in mind to attract fewer flying and crawling pests.



For these areas, choose LED bulbs that have more "warm white" and yellow tones, because bulbs that produce more "cool white", or bluish tones attract more insects. Also, some specialty LED bulbs, especially plant grow lights, contain UV light and these attract insects.

Keep in mind that if everything else is equal, a brighter light bulb will attract more insects than a dimmer light. Use only the number of lumens, or watts, that you need for adequate visibility.