



PEST MANAGEMENT



YOUR LOCAL EXPERTS
A COMPANY YOU KNOW AND TRUST

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The Pest Bulletin

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.

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 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!

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.

Termite Misconceptions

At some time, all of us have ignored a danger, and ended up suffering the consequences.

Many people don't realize how dangerous termites are for our wooden structures.

These pests damage over 600,000 homes each year in this country, causing about six billion dollars of damage. A mature colony of some kinds of termites contain as many as several million of these wood-eaters—and you can bet that many hungry mouths eat a lot of wood!

Without realizing it, the way we build homes actually helps these damaging pests by creating structures that concentrate wood (which tastes like steak to termites) where termites can easily get to it. It is a mistake to think concrete stops termites—it only slows them down. Concrete foundations develop cracks, some of which are hidden, and concrete

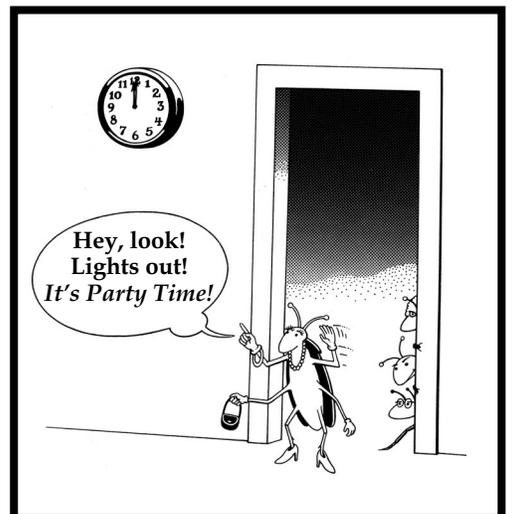
has holes in it where pipes and electrical wires enter the home. Sooner or later termites always find these gaps and gradually cause extensive damage, unless the home is being protected with our treatments.



People do many things that end up increasing the probability that termites will enter a structure.

For instance, they plant trees and shrubs too close to the foundation, so that the roots eventually crack the concrete. They let structural wood stay in contact with the ground, giving termites direct access to their food. And they frequently allow moisture problems to continue, and/or leave firewood, form boards, or other wood laying on the ground.

Never assume your home is termite-free. Call us if you have not had your home professionally inspected recently. This is the wisest defense against these common and destructive pests.



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.