

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.

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.

Reduce Your Fire Hazard

On the surface of things it might appear that pests have very little to do with fires. Fire experts, however, say that many home fires are caused by pests, including over 50% of home fires of "undetermined origin". Rats and mice are the main culprits, but even pests like birds, ants, and termites cause fires. Here's what happens.

Rats, mice, and birds like to *build nests* in or on buildings. These nests are built of dry and often highly flammable materials. They use pieces of fabric, shredded paper, pieces of string, dried grass, etc.—all perfect materials to catch fire. They'll even bring matches to their nest, and have been known to gnaw on the phosphorous coating, which can set their nests on fire. Sparrows love cigarette butts, and have been known to bring back still-smoldering butts that



start a fire.

Electrical shorts and resulting fires can be caused when rodents *gnaw on electrical wires and cables.* Sometimes they gnaw into wires to get to the cottony insulation material, which they use in their nests. But even if there is no nesting material in the wires, they seem to like to gnaw on hard substances like electrical wires.

Electrical shorts also have been caused by insects like termites and ants. These insects sometimes remove the protective insulation from around wires. Some ants are actually able to detect magnetic fields around wiring, and are attracted to these fields.

Pests are just one of many causes of fires, but it is one more important reason to have regular professional pest control services.



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!

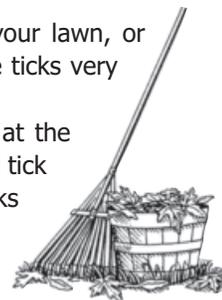
Even if manufacturers fix this problem, be aware that rats and mice will always be attracted to warm engines, as well as vehicles parked and unused for long periods, and will still do damage there because they are "chewers" by nature. They also chew on upholstery and other items inside vehicles. *Because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