

Summer Biting & Stinging Pests

Because of the COVID-19 virus, we will all be spending more time in our homes and yards this summer. Biting and stinging pests can make life miserable there, and are often a health hazard for us and our pets. Here are some to watch for.

Pests that inject venom when they sting include many kinds of *bees, wasps, hornets, yellowjackets, ants, spiders, scorpions, stinging caterpillars, and centipedes*. Because these pests are often trying to defend themselves or their nests, most of their stings are designed to hurt instantly—OUCH!

These stings aren't likely to transmit

diseases, but their venom can be dangerous, especially if you get stung multiple times by insects that live in colonies. Somewhere over 3% of our population is highly allergic to insect stings. If you are, you should seek medical attention after just one sting.

Pests that suck blood include *mosquitoes, ticks, fleas, bed bugs, chiggers and other mites, lice, biting midges, conenose bugs, and biting flies such as horse flies*.

Most of these pests inject a local anesthetic so you don't even feel it as they steal your blood. But the allergic reaction to the compounds they inject in

you causes swelling and itching. And because they tap directly into your bloodstream, these pests are capable of transmitting sometimes serious diseases when they bite.

Our regular services are more important than ever because they greatly reduce most of these widespread and serious pest problems. Talk to us about specialized services to deal with particular pest problems.



Pest Prevention Tip of the Month

Ripe fruits and nuts in your yard attract yellowjackets, wasps, fruit flies, and other insect pests, as well as rats (like those displaced because of the COVID-19 virus—see back of this newsletter). Keep fruits and nuts picked as they ripen, and regularly pick up any that drop to the ground.

Your Landscaping & Pests

With COVID-19 causing people to spend more time at home, many of us are spending more time in our yards, enjoying them and caring for them. It is important to be aware of and correct landscape issues that increase pest problems in and around your home.

Mulching around a foundation may help keep down weeds, but it can also create moist conditions that attract pests. Whenever possible, replace wood-based mulches bordering your foundation with either gravel mulch, or rubber mulch made from old tires. Studies show thick mulches, even gravel mulches, keep the soil under them moist and more conducive to pests, so whatever mulch you use around your foundation, just use a *thin* layer. Also remove plants crawling up walls and limbs close to or touching your walls or roof.

Shrubs with foliage hugging the ground are good hiding places for rats

and mice as they wander around at night. These should be pruned up off the ground.



Areas in your yard that have **weeds or high grass** need to be cut down with a mower or weed-eater.

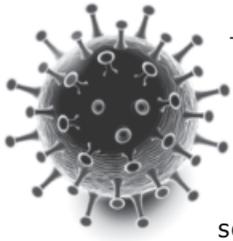
Aphids and other sucking insects on outdoor plants attract and feed ants, and need to be controlled.

Check your sprinklers to make sure they are not hitting the side of your home, increasing the moisture content in your walls and under your home.

Ground covers, especially ivy beds, are a particular problem next to or near the foundation because they provide cover for rodents, plus certain kinds of cockroaches and other pests. If you can remove or trim down groundcovers yearly to keep them low, it reduces hiding and breeding places.



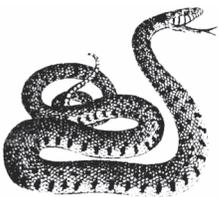
COVID-19 News



Pest control has always been an essential business, and we have been especially recognized as such in this crazy COVID-19 era. In so many ways, by eliminating pests that spread diseases, **we are essential defenders of public health.** By reducing or eliminating the number of pests that can spread or transmit diseases, or cause allergies in the 25 million people in this country that have asthma, we all stay healthier and our bodies are better able to fight off additional threats like the COVID-19 virus.

Please know that as we continue to serve you during the current pandemic, we have taken *extra sanitation and other precautions to protect you*, our valued customers, and our employees. We will get through this together to better times ahead!

Bites from Dead Snakes? Yes!



Incredibly, a rattlesnake has a reflex that makes them dangerous for up to 60 minutes after they die. The importance of this reflex has been well documented in medical journals. In one Arizona report, 15% of people that were treated with rattlesnake bites had been bitten by dead snakes. Of these, all survived, but one person lost a finger.

These bites all occurred when a person handled a recently killed rattlesnake head—even if the head had been cut off, shot, or beaten.

There also have been reports of people getting a dose of venom from scratching themselves on long dead rattlesnake fangs made into ashtrays and other souvenir items.

BOTTOM LINE: Don't fool with rattlesnake heads—dead or alive!

COVID-19 and Pests



Changes because of the COVID-19 virus are affecting pest populations in many ways. Here are just two pests, and how they are being influenced by people spending more time at home.

RATS & MICE: When these pests are starving, they are forced to move to search for food. Rodents in cities and towns where there is usually plenty of food because of the restaurants, and people eating outdoors, are now on the move, searching. There are increased reports of rodents moving about, sometimes in broad daylight. Residential areas that are nearby have already been experiencing more rodent problems, especially new rat burrows where there were none before.

BED BUGS: The good news is that there may be fewer *new* bed bug infestations in *homes*. These blood-suckers spread when they climb inside purses, clothes or boxes, sometimes from work or while taking public transit or sitting at a restaurant or another infested site. With people staying at home more, and practicing social distancing, bed bugs are less likely to be transported home.

But here is the bad news: if a home *already has* a few bed bugs, with people spending more time sleeping or on a couch watching TV or playing video games, bed bug populations have a more consistent food source and are likely to grow much more rapidly.

Bed bug infestations in *apartments* are likely to increase for the same reason. Unfortunately as their populations become larger and they aren't treated, they are spreading faster than normal into surrounding apartments.

New Giant Hornets

The **Asian Giant Hornet**, which kills up to 50 people a year in Japan, has been spotted in the United States for the first time. These hornets, called *murder hornets* in the media, have a potent venom and stinger—at ¼ inch long, their huge stinger is long enough to puncture a beekeeping suit. Victims have likened their sting to hot metal driving into their skin. And a single hornet can sting repeatedly without dying.

These hornets are especially a threat to honeybees, one of their favorite foods. Just a few of the hornets can destroy an entire hive of honeybees in just a few hours. They cut off the honeybee heads, and carry the thorax and bee larvae and pupae back to feed their own young.

Last fall the first Asian Giant Hornets were discovered both in Washington, and across the border in Vancouver Island, British Columbia. An entire nest of the hornets was discovered and destroyed on Vancouver Island, and two single wasps were discovered in Washington. A genetic analysis showed that the Washington wasps did not come from the same colony that was destroyed. Traps have been placed over a huge area to see where more hornets turn up. Hopefully these hornets can be found and eliminated soon, because with each passing month they are more likely to spread and become more difficult to eliminate.

Asian Giant Hornets are the largest hornets in the world. The queen is enormous at *over 2 inches long*. Workers are about 1 ½ inches long. They have a 3 inch wingspan and can fly 25 mph and an amazing 60 miles in a day. They have orange/yellow heads and orange and black/brown striped bodies.



ASIAN GIANT HORNET