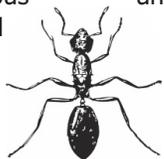




The Rise of “Super Ants”

Ants are incredibly successful insects that are becoming more serious pests every year. In fact, several years ago they edged out cockroaches as the most common household pest in the country. There are several reasons why.



ghost ants, red imported fire ants, and pharaoh ants.

“Super ants” or “tramp ants” are terms often used to describe these newer species of ants. They are really “super pests”, in a super-bad way! Most share some common traits. Compared to most of our native ants, which only have one egg-laying queen per colony, these ants have many egg-laying queens, so their colonies grow faster and larger. Plus, many eventually establish multiple interconnected colonies, and because they are genetically the same, ants from these

colonies aren’t aggressive towards each other as other ants often are.

Super ants also easily adapt to living and thriving where we live and work. The result of all this is more and larger extended ant colonies, and more problems with them invading homes and businesses. As super ants continue to spread, our professional ant control and on-going prevention services have become more important than ever. We are the local *ant experts*, here to help you have a more pest-free life!

Watch for Termite Swarmers!

One way homeowners discover they have termites is when they see winged reproductive termites, called swarmers. During swarming season, hundreds of termites with wings will make a mass exodus out of a colony and take to the air. Usually this happens after a rain as the temperatures begin to warm and the days lengthen, but it can happen at other times as well.



Once these termites emerge from their nest, they quickly begin flying, and any wind will spread them even further. They quickly pair up, pry off their wings, and retreat to a cozy dark place where they mate and start a new colony. Swarmers that emerge indoors are attracted to bright lights and are often found around windows and lights. Finding termites or their wings indoors is almost always a sign that the house is infested

and being attacked by these wood-destroyers.

Termites in periods of low rainfall are less likely to swarm. At those times they often go deeper into the ground, waiting for more favorable conditions. Also, only mature colonies produce swarmers. *So termites can be eating your home even if you don't see swarmers or other signs of termites.* A professional inspection is the best way to determine if your home is infested with termites or other destroyers.

Call us if you haven't had a recent inspection for wood-destroying pests, or if you find swarmers or other signs of termites, and we will schedule an inspection. *Finding infestations early and eliminating them before they cause major damage can easily save you hundreds, and sometimes many thousands of dollars.*

Pest Prevention Tip of the Month

Once opened, place pet food and pet treats in tightly sealed glass or plastic containers and label them. Not only will this keep them fresher longer, it will also keep out insects and rodents. Use garbage cans with tight-fitting lids to store large bags of pet food.



Stop napping—
time to go and be a pest!

Mice Eat Monarch Butterflies



Monarch butterflies have only a small number of natural enemies because their bodies contain bitter, toxic cardenolides in them from the milkweed the caterpillars eat. Only a few birds, spiders, fire ants, etc can eat the butterflies. A number of years ago it was discovered that several species of mice in the monarch overwintering areas in central Mexico were eating monarchs that fell to the ground at night. The mice ate about 25 monarch butterflies each per night!

A new study discovered monarchs at an overwintering site in coastal California are being eaten by mice as well. This was the western harvest mouse, a different species than the mice eating the monarchs in Mexico. This discovery suggests mice also may be eating monarch butterflies in other areas.

It is not yet known how big of an impact mice have on overwintering monarch populations. There has been a lot of concern recently about monarchs, because the number of overwintering butterflies is only a fraction of what it has been in the past.

New Millipede Has the Most Legs



A new millipede species has the most legs on the planet—one of the specimens had an astonishing 1,306 of them! The most legs previously recorded was a millipede with 750 legs. In fact, most millipedes have fewer than 100 legs. Note that 'millipede' means *thousand-footed* in Latin, so this is the first specimen that has actually lived up to its name!

The millipede came from 200 feet below the Earth's surface in Australia, in a borehole. The borehole had been dug to look for minerals, then was capped and abandoned. We know very little about the world deep in the earth!

Your Questions Answered

Q. How widespread are foodborne illnesses?



A. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), tainted food now **sickens** an estimated **48 million Americans** (1 in 6) every year, resulting in **128,000 hospitalizations** and **3,000 deaths**. The vast majority of food poisoning cases involve only vomiting and diarrhea, which most people do not report to a doctor.

Foodborne bacteria, viruses, and parasites are the most common causes of food poisoning. The primary known offenders are *Norovirus* in drinking water, greens, oysters, etc, *Salmonella* in contaminated, undercooked eggs and many other foods, and *Clostridium perfringens* in meats kept at unsafe temperatures, *Campylobacter* bacteria from undercooked chicken and *Staphylococcus aureus* from sliced meats and other foods not cooked after handling. *There are many other known pathogens, plus a far greater number of foodborne illnesses the CDC classifies as "of unknown origin".*

The CDC reminds us all to take steps to reduce our risk of foodborne illnesses. Preventative measures include washing hands, proper cleaning of food, utensils and countertops, keeping raw meats separated from prepared foods, thorough cooking, and proper refrigeration to retard the growth of microbes. **Regular treatments to prevent pests** are very important, because pests carry a wide variety of organisms and can transmit them as they walk and poop on food, utensils, and food preparation surfaces.

Q. Can young black widow spiders crawl through window screens?

A. Yes. A study in the *Journal of Economic Entomology* reported that spiderlings (just hatched spiders) can easily crawl through the typical aluminum screening used for household windows and doors. The screen opening sizes of these are usually 1.2 by 1.5 mm. Screening with much smaller .59 mm openings reduced the number of spiders that crawled through but even then it did not block all of the young spiders.



This study shows that there is no practical screening that can exclude young spiders. The mesh needs to be so fine that it would restrict air flow and quickly become clogged with debris.

Widow spiders, like many other spiders, emerge from the egg sac and remain nearby for just a few hours or days. After that the spiderlings crawl to a high point and let out a strand of silk. When a breeze catches the strands, it lifts them and the lightweight spiders so that they float through the air. This process is called 'ballooning.' *In this way they easily reinvade areas, making regular preventative treatments important.*

Q. Why are some bugs called "kissing bugs"?



A. *Triatoma* bugs, also called conenose bugs, are like bed bugs in that they come out at night, pierce the skin and suck up the blood of their unknowing victims. Although they may bite any exposed skin of the body, *Triatoma* mouthparts are weak so they often choose the areas with the thinnest skin. *Lips* and *eyelids* are not only thin, they usually are exposed.

This results in many of the bites being on these areas (yuck!), resulting in swelling and redness there—hence the name "kissing bugs".