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# The Pest Bulletin

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## Grandma Had Kitchen Pests!

Grandma—and even her great-grandma—had some of the same problems with pests in her kitchen we face today. She had bugs in her flour, plus rats, mice, flies, cockroaches, and other pests in her kitchen. How did she contend with such problems without access to modern pest management services? Did she just put up with the pests? You've got to be kidding—not those tough, hard-working grandmas!

Grandma was smart, and you can use some of the same principles she used. She inspected incoming goods for pests. She learned to rotate her food supplies, especially spices and grains, so food wasn't sitting around for months.

She put many of her goods in tins and glass jars to keep critters out. If she lived where winters were cold, and before freezers came along, she may have left contaminated containers outdoors in the snow to kill off pests.

Of course, they also ate more bugs! Yuck! She used the flour anyway, picking out what bugs she saw, or sifting them out. Eating a few didn't harm anyone usually, and the bugs provided extra protein. However, sometimes the food turned rancid because of the pests and their



droppings, and hopefully she threw it out. People also had more serious intestinal problems because of the bacteria and pests in their food. Among other problems, the hairs on certain flour beetles break off easily and cause intestinal problems.

So, don't worry about your grandma! She worked hard and did the best she could. We're just fortunate today to have professional pest control services make our lives so much healthier and better.

## Three Pest Control Myths

Consumers spend millions of dollars a year on pest control products that don't work. Here are just three of many popular products that people waste money on.

**Cedar Wood**, often sold as cedar balls or chips, has a pleasant-smelling chemical in it that is a weak repellent of clothes moths and carpet beetles. Even though the vapors work when the wood is fresh cut, they quickly become too weak to repel pests. A cedar chest has some repellent effect inside it if it is constructed tightly so the vapors can build up sufficiently, but only for a year or so.

**Bug Zappers** are light traps that attract night-flying pests. They are equipped with an electrified grid that "zaps" or electrocutes insects when they hit the grid. While the ultraviolet lights

are especially attractive to flying insects, only a tiny fraction of the insects killed are actually biting mosquitoes—the vast majority of the insects killed are harmless, non-biting night-flying insects that were attracted to the light. Meanwhile, the annoying zapping sound goes on all night.

**Ultrasonic or electronic pest devices** have been advertised for some years now as repellents for everything from rodents to fleas, mosquitoes, and other insect pests. This is one of the strangest stories of them all, because tests show they are useless, but people pay \$10 to \$100 on them because they sound so neat, and we all love electronic gizmos. One recent study showed mosquitoes were actually attracted to one kind being sold, but otherwise, pests just ignore them.



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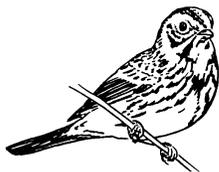
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## Bird Feeders Can Spread Diseases

Several wild bird experts have advised against the practice of feeding birds by heaping food on large tables. Bird tables tend to concentrate bird droppings, and these droppings often become contaminated with *Salmonella* and *E. coli* bacteria. In one study, 90% of 116 dead birds found near bird tables had died of infections from these bacteria.



If you feed wild birds, experts recommend you keep the feeding areas free of droppings, and/or place smaller quantities of food in a variety of locations rather than concentrating it all in one spot.

Of course, bird food also attracts rats, mice, and other pests. Be sure bird feeders are inaccessible to rodents. Daily clean up any food that has spilled on the ground. If the area can't be kept clean, at a minimum place all feeders well away from your house so that rodents won't be lured closer to your home.



## Vampire Bats Sense Their Victims

Here's a chilling new fact. Vampire bats have special nerves in their faces that can sense the heat of blood in our veins. This tells them where blood flows closest to the skin of their prey, and helps the bats know exactly the best place to bite.

Vampire bats are the only bats that feed on blood. There is one kind of vampire bat that feeds only on the blood of mammals, including humans, whereas other vampire bats feed on bird blood. All vampire bats need a blood meal every one or two days.

Fortunately, the bats we have around here feed exclusively on insects—vampire bats occur only in Central and South America, and on movie screens!

## WHAT Do You Call That?

When you see one of an animal, you call it by its name. But when you see a group of the same animal together, what you call that group is often a very different term. For instance, a group of sheep is a *flock*, or when driven are called a *drift*, but a group of elk is a *gang*, and a group of lions is a *pride*. A group of apes is a *troop*, a group of eagles is a *convocation*, and a group of quail is a *bevy*.

Here are some even more fascinating group terms you may not know: a group of crows is properly called a *murder*, a group of raccoons is a *gaze*, a group of squirrels is a *scurry*, and a group of starlings is a *murmuration*.

A group of insects in general is a *plague*, *hoard*, or *rabble*. But more specifically, a group of cockroaches is called an *intrusion*, a group of flies is a *cloud* or *swarm*, mosquitoes a *scourge*, and more than one rat is a *pack*, or a *mischievous* of rats.



### Sterile Medical Packs Contaminated by Cockroaches

A study found that cockroaches were able to chew through double-wrapped hospital sterile medical packs prepared for surgery, and contaminate these packs with bacteria. The study reinforces the importance of controlling cockroaches, as well as storing medical packs in truly cockroach-proof wrappers.

### Fly Transmission of Campylobacter Bacteria

*Campylobacter* bacteria are not as well known as bacteria like *Salmonella* or *E. coli*, but they cause infections in both humans and chickens that reach a peak every summer when flies are most abundant. This fact has resulted in many recent investigations that confirm flies are an important transmitter of *Campylobacter*.

*Campylobacter* bacteria can cause severe reactions in our intestines (including bloody diarrhea), and sometimes causes a serious nervous system disorder called *Guillain-Barre syndrome*.

Flies pick up the bacteria when they feed on animal feces. A study just published in the *Journal of Medical Entomology* has shown that the flies only retain and transmit the *Campylobacter* bacteria for about 24 hours or less. This means that flies carry the bacteria a relatively short distance, because most flies do not travel far in one day.

Good sanitation around your home or business, in addition to regular professional pest control, are important precautions against flies and all fly-transmitted bacteria.

