

MEMBER
NATIONAL
PEST CONTROL
ASSOCIATION
HEADED BY AN ENTOMOLOGIST

JULY/AUGUST 2009
Vol. 21 No. 4

The Pest Bulletin

PRSRST STD
US Postage
PAID
PERMIT NO 496
Berkeley, CA

McKINZIE PEST CONTROL
A McKINZIE INC. COMPANY

www.pest-free.net

209 Commercial • Emporia, KS 66801 • (620) 342-4222

1129 Hayes Dr • Manhattan, KS 66502 • (785) 776-6063

Lights—The Bugs Will Come!

Outdoor lights are a great benefit and increase security, but they also can create more pest problems. When lights shine on a door or window, crawling and flying insects will be drawn to these areas in large numbers on warm nights. If these lights are visible from far off, they can attract pests from far away right to your front door!

Some of these pests will eventually find their way indoors. Others will stay around the lit area and start eating the plants they find, or lay eggs that hatch and become pests. Others will be eaten by spiders, ants, and



centipedes, which are attracted to the area by the plentiful food source.

Here are a few helpful tips from us to help reduce this problem:

► Brighter lights attract more insects, so **reduce wattage** whenever possible.

► **Don't turn lights on** until one hour after sunset to avoid many early-flying insects, and then turn them off when they are not needed. In non-essential areas use motion-sensor lights.

► **Switch from using fluorescent and mercury vapor bulbs** that are highly attractive to pests to sodium vapor or halogen lights that are much less

attractive. **For incandescent bulbs, switch from white to yellow**—the wave length put out by yellow bulbs is less visible to insects.

► **Shine lights towards a door** rather than placing the light directly over a door. That way insects are attracted more to the light source and away from the entry.

► **Block lights with shields** so that they illuminate key areas but are not visible from a long distance out.



Green Pest Prevention Tip of the Month

Be sure to daily pick up fruits and nuts that fall from your trees. These attract yellowjackets and wasps during the day; at night rats and mice feed on them. Dispose of these items in a garbage can with a tight lid—never throw them on top of an open compost pile.

Bed Bug Facts



Bed bugs were rare in this country for decades, but they have come back with a vengeance. Unfortunately these pests are spreading and will probably become even more common in the years ahead.

Bed bugs are serious blood-sucking pests. While they aren't known to transmit diseases, their bites can cause itchy red marks, and distress. They are time-consuming and costly to control, but if you do nothing about them, the problem gets worse while they multiply and spread to other rooms, and eventually to homes of friends and family.

Bed bugs remain hidden during the day and come out at night to feed, so many people are unaware they have this pest until they get bitten. It takes bed bugs less than ten minutes of sucking to engorge themselves with blood. They are so good at it that the victim usually doesn't feel a thing.

Some people don't react to the bites, but usually an itchy welt or localized swelling develops where a bed bug has bitten. Bed bug bites look like flea bites without the red center. Also, flea bites are commonly found around the ankles and legs, while bed bug bites occur on any skin exposed while sleeping. Another tell-tale sign of bed bugs is dark spotting and staining on bed sheets.

Bed bugs hitchhike into homes via infested second-hand beds, sofas, blankets and carpets. Travelers can unknowingly bring them back in their suitcases. In apartments and hotels bed bugs crawl from unit to unit.

Hopefully you don't have these nasty blood-sucking pests, but if you ever do, don't wait while the problem gets worse—call us to control them for you!



Thank you for your business and referrals!

A New Stink Bug

We hate to report it, but a stink bug is spreading in this country and becoming a serious problem. Stink bugs, true to their name, exude a stinky smell if they are crushed—or even disturbed. The new unwelcome arrival is called the *brown marmorated stink bug*. 'Marmorated' describes its variegated or marbled appearance—the adults are a mottled brownish gray color.

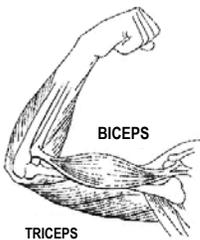
This stinky pest originated from Asia and arrived in Allentown, Pennsylvania about 1996, where it started causing problems but was not positively identified until 2001. Since then it has spread into parts of New Jersey, Delaware, Maryland and Virginia, with single reports in Ohio and as far north as Connecticut. Recently established populations have also been found in California and Oregon. Eventually it will spread throughout the country. It spreads by flying, and also by hitchhiking on vehicles and in shipments.

The brown marmorated stink bug feeds on a wide variety of plants, including fruit and shade trees and vegetables. Like some other fall-invading pests, it congregates on the sides of homes and other buildings in the fall and eventually finds a way inside, looking for shelter. It's a nuisance then as well as whenever the winter temperatures rise, when they start wandering about indoors. This stink bug has a particularly strong, unpleasant, and long-lasting odor.



Mosquito Myth Busted!

There is an intriguing method of killing mosquitoes that many people have heard about, you can find it on the internet, and it was even mentioned in an old *Discover Magazine* (August 1997). These sources say that if a mosquito is biting you on the biceps of your arm, all you have to do is tense your skin to trap the mosquito's feeding tube (proboscis) in your skin, and then flex your biceps muscle. Supposedly if you do this, blood will keep flowing forcefully into the mosquito until the abdomen swells up and finally bursts.



Although this sounds like an intriguing idea, this bizarre method of killing a mosquito apparently does not work. The only way you can cause a mosquito to take in too much blood and explode is to surgically sever its ventral nerve cord. The nerve cord sends messages between the stomach and mosquito's brain; when the cord is cut, the mosquito continues to suck blood until it quadruples its body weight, whereupon it explodes.

Another common myth busted!

Your Questions Answered

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

A. Yes. A recent study in the *Journal of Economic Entomology* (June 2009) 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 normally 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.

Fungus Gnats Are Common Indoors

A common pest people see indoors year-round, but especially during the summer months, are little flies called fungus gnats. These flies typically breed in damp soil, usually in the soil of over-watered house plants and indoor planter boxes. The adults fly to windows or lights, or can be seen running in a jerky manner across surfaces.

You can prevent these flies from breeding by letting the soil dry out more between waterings; this kills the fly eggs and larvae. Sometimes the fungus gnats are not breeding in soil, and may even be breeding outdoors, so finding and treating the source in these cases can take some detective work.

Fungus gnats are just one of several small flies that are problems indoors.

Pest Trivia

Another '**Super Ant**': An ant called the *invasive garden ant* was unknown in Europe until it was discovered in Hungary in 1990. These ants have quickly spread all over Europe, and they may soon cross over and become a serious pest here. Invasive garden ants exterminate native ants and form huge super-colonies of interconnected, cooperative 'sister' nests that can cover hundreds or even thousands of miles.

Rat Island: This 7000 acre island in Alaska became *infested with rats* after a boat was shipwrecked on it in 1780. Formerly an important bird nesting site, the rats had killed off most of the birds until a giant, \$2.5 million rat baiting project was started. Baiting ended in October 2008. When the island was inspected in June of this year no live rats were found—so far. Eliminating rats on Rat Island will benefit 26 species of birds. To date, 300 islands around the world have been rid of rats.