



MEMBER  
NATIONAL  
PEST CONTROL  
ASSOCIATION  
HEADED BY AN ENTOMOLOGIST

**McKINZIE PEST CONTROL**  
A McKINZIE INC. COMPANY

MARCH/APRIL 2012  
Vol. 24 No. 2

## The Pest Bulletin

PRSR STD  
US Postage  
PAID  
PERMIT NO 496  
Berkeley, CA

www.pest-free.net

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

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

# Protecting What's Precious

Did you know that as recently as 1935, before widespread mosquito control, 4,000 Americans died every year from malaria?

In fact, modern, professional pest control has improved the quality of our lives in many ways. Because of it, many insect-transmitted diseases have been greatly reduced in this country. We live longer, healthier lives, without fear of sometimes deadly diseases like malaria, yellow fever, and louse-borne typhus.

Yet there are other pest-transmitted diseases that we have to watch for vigilantly. Tick borne diseases including Lyme disease are flourishing, and there are deadly pest-transmitted diseases like hantavirus, encephalitis, and plague,

plus those that cause common everyday illnesses, like food poisoning.

Of course bed bugs, which people previously knew only through nursery rhymes, have come back with a vengeance. These nasty blood-suckers over the last decade have become more and more common. Cockroaches can cause asthma, and rats bite 45,000 people annually—mostly children and babies. Stinging and biting pests like fleas, ticks, wasps, and spiders would inflict harm on even more people and pets if it weren't for professional pest control.



Professional pest control also enables us to better protect our homes and property from pests. Termites, carpenter ants, and other wood-destroyers left uncontrolled can severely damage a building. And other pests damage or spoil stored food, fabrics, and many other important household items.

These are just some of the many ways professional pest control greatly improves the quality of our daily lives.

## Pests are Starting to Invade

Some people talk about unwelcome 2-legged friends and relatives who come for a long visit. But it can be far worse to have an infestation of many unwanted house "guests" of the 4-legged variety (rodents), 6 legs (insects), their 8-legged kin (spiders), and too-many-legs-to-count pests (centipedes and millipedes). All these many-legged "guests" are very unwelcome!

Your home, after all, is your castle—your refuge, the safe place above all else where you should be able to control who and what comes in. *That's why our perimeter treatments are so popular.* These are special treatments around the outside of your home that are designed to stop crawling pests BEFORE they come indoors. We not only treat around your foundation, but other nearby key areas

where we know from experience pests hide and breed.



A professional perimeter treatment stops a huge variety of invading pests, including all kinds of ants, earwigs, crickets, sowbugs, millipedes, and centipedes, to name just a few. Invading pests may bite or sting, or they may cause expensive damage to your home and furnishings, or they may get into and contaminate your food and your pet's food. Pests easily enter through the thousands of openings in any home, such as gaps around where wires and pipes pass through the walls, gaps around doors and windows, and cracks that appear over time.

Our special perimeter treatments are just one of the important tools we use to enable you to enjoy the many practical and health benefits of a pest-free life!

**C**ongratulations to Collin Thomsen, son of Emporia Service Technician Chris Thomsen and his wife Vanessa! Collin has been accepted on a full scholarship to play football at the *Air Force Academy*.

The current recruiting class has been one of the most competitive in the history of the Academy. Collin will graduate from Emporia High School this spring with a 4.0 GPA and is ranked first in his class. He is a four year, three sport varsity athlete, competing in football, basketball and track.

*Everyone at McKinzie Pest Control wishes Collin the best as he begins his collegiate career!*

## Pest Prevention Tip of the Month

**T**hrune vines, shrubs, and trees away from walls and roofs. Plants growing within a foot of a wall keep it damper, which leads to more problems with pests. Where branches or foliage actually touch a wall or roof, pests frequently use these as bridges to crawl onto a building.

Thank you for your business and referrals!

## A Bad Year for Lyme Disease Predicted

It is well understood that the quantity of acorns produced by oak trees is a very good indicator of the size of mouse populations. The fall of 2010 in the Northeast set a record high for acorn production, at an amazing average of *250 pounds* of acorns per tree. But the fall of 2011 was the opposite, with an average of *less than half a pound* of acorns produced per tree. This is tiny compared to the 25 to 30 pounds of acorns produced per tree in an average year.



Because of this quite unusual two-year sequence of an unprecedented production of acorns followed by extremely low numbers, populations of field mice and squirrels have been declining after reaching very high levels. These rodent populations had supported large populations of young larval ticks.



Tick nymphs are the next stage after the larvae, and this stage poses the greatest threat of transmitting Lyme disease to people. Early this year we will see a huge population of these nymphs emerge. They will be aggressively looking for hosts to suck blood from, and because there will be both more ticks and fewer rodent hosts, far more people will be bitten than normal.



## Spiky Rat Has Deadly Hair

The *crested rat* is the only animal on earth that coats itself with a deadly poison to ward off predators. The rat, which grows to roughly a foot and a half long, lives in East Africa. Locals have long told stories about dogs becoming ill or dying after encounters with it, but until recently it was never understood why.



New studies have revealed that this kind of rat chews the toxic bark of the *Acokanthera tree*, and then applies its deadly drool to its own spiky hair. Their hairs are actually hollow and readily absorb the toxic saliva mixture. The rat is black and white, a common warning coloration for animals.

It's not clear why the crested rat is unaffected by the poison. Dogs that have attacked the rat often die, or suffer paralysis that can last for a couple of weeks.

## Fear of Pests is Natural

Do you know anyone who's NOT afraid of either spiders, mice, snakes, or some other creature? Probably not. Even the fictional hero Indiana Jones quivered with fear when confronted with snakes!

Scientists have discovered that we are pre-conditioned to fear potential dangers such as heights and spiders. And humans are not alone in being born with certain fears. A mouse, for instance, will instantly freeze when it sees a cat, even if the mouse has never seen a cat before.

The center of fear in our brain is a set of two tiny organs, called the *amygdala* (pronounced ah-MIG-dah-la). Stimulating these organs causes hormone glands to start pumping out adrenaline, producing the racing heart, clammy hands, and dry mouth that typify fear.

That reaction puts us instantly on the alert and helps us to respond quickly to a potential threat, possibly saving our lives. The danger may or may not be real—the organ doesn't take the time to logically analyze the threat.

So next time you see a creature that makes you freeze up, you'll know that the set of two almond-sized glands in your brain, the amygdala, is active and functioning.



## Snakes on a Plane

A man was caught recently on a plane with 247 exotic animals stuffed inside a bulging suitcase. The animals included nine species of poisonous snakes, including deadly South American pit vipers packed in clear plastic containers. In all, there were 15 venomous vipers and several young boa constrictors, plus over 200 other reptiles and mollusks, some rare and endangered. Several of them had already died from lack of oxygen.



With people doing stupid things like this, it's one more reason pest species continue to spread around the globe. The man faces attempted smuggling charges and up to 10 years in prison if convicted.

## Mansion Demolished Because of Termites

Tiger Wood's ex wife had her \$12 million mansion completely demolished because of *extensive termite and carpenter ant infestations* throughout the foundation. She plans on rebuilding a new home in the same spot, very similar to the original home. This just goes to show how expensive untreated pest problems can become!



Don't let this happen to you! Regular inspections and preventative treatments save you time and money.