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## The Pest Bulletin

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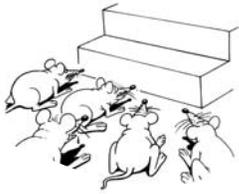
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# Rodent Season Starts in Earnest



While rats and mice are problems year-round, we always see calls about rodents spike starting in the fall. It's

at thistime that they start moving indoors from their outdoor summer breeding places. They are searching for a drier, warmer place to spend the winter, and looking for more food as their food supply outdoors dwindles. Homes and businesses become prime targets for invasion.

Many of our customers ask how they can help keep mice and rats from invading. Here are some important tips

that can help, but remember there is absolutely no sure way to prevent their entry. If your best efforts fail and the intruders still get in, our trained technicians can send them packing!

### Avoid attracting rodents by...

- Keeping grass and weeds cut short so rodents don't have any cover. Mow down, prune, or replace thick groundcovers so they provide less cover. Trim up shrubs to remove hiding places underneath them.

- Making sure any bird feeders are rodent proof and using less messy bird feeders that catch seeds before they fall to the ground. Keep bird feeders away from the home so fallen seed won't lure

rodents closer.

- Daily cleaning up any fallen fruits and nuts from trees.

### Keep out rodents by...

- Sealing all visible entrances such as where pipes enter the foundation for spigots, air conditioners, gas lines, etc. Repair screens and cover foundation vents with rodent proof screen material.

- Making sure all outside doors, including garage doors, fit snugly around the edges and especially along the bottom.

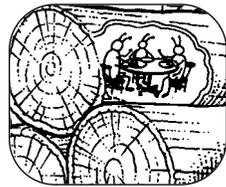
## Uninvited Holiday Intruders

A number of pests become problems during the holidays. Keep your eye out for these.

### Christmas tree pests.

Fresh Christmas trees and greenery like wreaths are wonderful holiday decorations, but they can also harbor a variety of pests, including *spiders*, *aphids*, and *caterpillars*. These pests become active and start flying and crawling about in the warmer air indoors, and as the tree dries out. We recommend rinsing fresh Christmas trees and greenery with a strong jet of water before you bring them indoors. This will not only dislodge most pests, but dirt and dust as well.

**Holiday feast pests.** *Ants*, *rats*, *mice*, *cockroaches*, and *other pests* can have a feast themselves after your holiday feast. Before the night is over, seal leftovers, place food trash in garbage cans with tight-fitting lids, and clean the



dishes, or simply leave them in a sink of soapy water.

### Firewood pests.

When you bring firewood indoors from the cold, pests on it that were inactive warm up and start moving around. Avoid this problem by inspecting the firewood, especially looking

under loose bark and in cavities, before you bring it indoors. Only bring in enough wood to last one day. Store firewood outdoors, off the ground, and preferably away from your home.

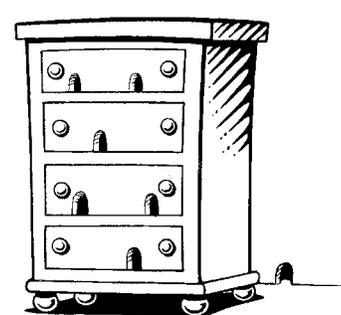
### Pests from overnight guests.

A variety of pests can crawl inside suit cases. Although they are still less common, *bed bugs* are increasingly being spread this way. If the luggage was in a place known to be infested with bed bugs, don't bring it indoors. Unpack it outdoors, and if you find bed bugs, consult us.



## THANK YOU!

*We want to **THANK** all of our long-time and new customers for your valued business and many referrals. We wish each and every one of you **HAPPINESS** and **SUCCESS** during the New Year!*



**Oh honey, it's perfect! Now all of our children can join us for the holidays!**

## Termites and Katrina Damage

New evidence points to Formosan subterranean termites as having a possible role in the collapse of some key floodwalls during the devastating Katrina hurricane, according to a report in the Fall 2008 issue of *American Entomologist*. Louisiana floodwalls have expansion joints between concrete slabs, and these joints are sealed with oiled bagasse, a waste product that comes from sugarcane processing. Bagasse is highly attractive to termites, and inspection of a number of the floodwalls found that termites have eaten the bagasse, allowing water to seep behind the floodwalls. In one key area where the floodwall failed, the London Avenue Canal, over 70% of the seams show signs of termite attack.



Termites can also cause failure of soil dikes and dams. This is well documented in China, and the Chinese even have a 2,100-year-old proverb, "One white ant hole can destroy a 1,000-meter soil dike." (White ant is another name for termites.)

Termites create extensive tunnels while searching for wood. Termites also excavate exit holes to the surface, where winged termites fly out during swarming. These tunnels, as well as roots they have consumed, act as water channels that flow into a dam or dike and compromise it.

## Woman Shoots Herself Rather than Mice

A woman pulled out a .44-caliber Magnum revolver recently when she saw mice running across the floor of her trailer. But she accidentally dropped the gun, which went off when it struck the floor. The bullet went through the woman's kneecap, grazed a nearby man's groin and ended up in his coin pocket.

The mice escaped unharmed. We wonder how many bullet holes there are in her trailer from previous attempts to control mice!



## Be Smart and Avoid House Fires

A fire in a residence occurs every 78 seconds, and most fires occur during the late fall and winter months. Many of these fires are started by known causes we all need to be alert to, such as frayed electrical cords, overloaded circuits, fireplaces, candles and space heaters that are left unattended, dry Christmas trees, smoking in bed, etc.

Pests can also cause fires, and fire safety experts estimate that 50% of the fires of "undetermined origin" are actually caused by rats and mice. Rodents gnaw through wires, causing shorts, and they often pack together loose, flammable materials to make their nests. For some reason they even seem to like gnawing on the flammable end of matches. Because of their incredibly hard teeth, their gnawing can ignite a match. (It is a good idea to keep matches in metal containers, not only away from rodents, but high and out of reach of children.)

Electrical shorts can also be caused by insects like termites and various ants, which for some reason are often attracted to electrical fields, and eat into the protective insulation and coatings around wires. Many birds will incorporate cigarette butts into their nests, and if a butt is still smoldering, it can ignite a dry nest.

A fire can be devastating. It is important to be alert and proactively eliminate fire hazards. This is just *one more reason* why regular professional pest control service is especially important during the winter months.



## NEW DESIGNER FLY SWATTERS!

And you thought you had everything! Why settle for a *regular* fly swatter when there are *designer* fly swatters? Instead of the swatter webbing being dull and common, these fly swatters are actually an intricate street map of Milan, Italy! They come in six colors and are available on the internet through *Charles and Marie*.



A 14-month old Canadian boy is *completely blind* and has other neurological effects—he cannot sit up on his own—because of a rare disease caught from raccoons. The disease is caused by ingesting roundworm eggs found in raccoon feces. Young children with a history of eating dirt are most at risk. The first case of this kind was reported in 1984. Since that time, there have been fewer than 25 cases reported in the United States and Canada.

It is amazing how many cockroaches you can have after just one year, starting with *one pregnant stray cockroach*. This is assuming no pest services and the roaches have easy access to food, water, and shelter. With one American cockroach, in a year you can end up with *480 mature adult cockroaches*—an amazing number! But compare that to our most common cockroach, the German cockroach, which matures much faster. After just one year, you could have *over 63 million mature roaches*—a truly frightening number!