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Rats & Mice are Invading

If you are hearing the *pitter-patter* of little feet, it may not be the feet of those you love! Cooler weather causes large numbers of mice and rats to invade homes and buildings. They are looking for new food sources and a drier and warmer place to live and multiply.

There are many tell-tale signs that rats or mice have invaded. You may hear their scampering or gnawing sounds late at night, or you may see evidence of their presence, including droppings, gnaw marks, or tracks in flour or dusty areas. Along their paths

you may see signs of urine, or darkened smudge marks from the oil and dirt in their hair. Other rodent signs, to name a few, include rat burrows, caches of hoarded food, and over-excited pets.



Though both rats and mice are well adapted to living and multiplying indoors, they have very different habits. As the neighborhood pest experts, we know our prey! For instance, mice readily investigate new objects in their territory, but rats are cautious. Mice are

nibblers, while rats will settle down and take more time to eat larger amounts. Mice can survive long periods without water, while rats normally need water daily. Mice have small territories compared to rats.

If you, or your neighbors or friends, have mice or rats, call us to control them. The sooner we start on the problem (before they have become well-established and more numerous), the quicker we can "clean 'em out!"

Ultrasonic Devices Are WORTHLESS!

Who hasn't seen an ad recently touting the benefits of some kind of ultrasonic or subsonic pest control device? With all the advertising, you'd think they must work. But it just means they are cheap to make and easy to sell, proving again the old adage, "There is a sucker born every minute."

These devices sell for anywhere from \$6.99 to \$500.00 or more, but many hundreds of tests by universities and other unbiased testing agencies show that for both rodents and insects, none of them work. Novel ultrasonic flea repellers attached to cat and dog collars were the rage a number of years ago, but studies showed they made no difference in flea numbers. Then came ultrasonic devices you could install on the front of your car to supposedly drive away deer, so more tests were done and these showed they had no effect on deer, moose, and even kangaroos!



Studies on cats and dogs show that none of the devices affect them either. (Although in one test cats tended to move closer to the device—perhaps it was warmer, or had a nice smell!)

Why don't ultrasonic devices work? There are many reasons, but basically rodents and insects have no reason to avoid ultrasounds, plus they rapidly become accustomed to repeated sounds (a process called habituation). They also quickly learn that the sounds are not dangerous.

So, if you are thinking of spending money this holiday season on any kind of ultrasonic pest control device you "just plug in", don't throw away your money! The old adage, "If it sounds too good to be true, then it probably is." fits perfectly with these devices.

THANK YOU!
To all of our new and long-time customers we want to say **"THANK YOU!"** for your valued business and many referrals!
We wish you all
PEACE, HAPPINESS, and PROSPERITY
throughout the New Year!



Thank you for your business and referrals!

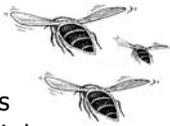
YELLOWJACKETS

Threaten Native Species

Western yellowjackets were accidentally introduced into Hawaii during the 1900's, and are causing serious problems. In the continental U.S. colonies of this yellowjacket usually die off each winter, and only the fertilized queens survive. However, in Hawaii's warm year-round climate, colonies don't die off; they continue to grow larger each year. Nests that are typically basketball-size and hold 50,000 workers—a serious enough problem—can become even larger and explode to 500,000 workers.



These yellowjackets can cause severe problems for native ecosystems. Adult yellowjackets consume large amounts of nectar, which means there is less for native insects and birds.



The pests apparently also are disrupting pollination of native plants. In addition, yellowjackets need protein for their growing broods, so they consume huge amounts of insects and other prey, leaving less food available for Hawaii's insect-eating birds, many of whose populations have dwindled. Even honey bees are food for these wasps—they kill the bees by decapitating them. This pest is indeed causing havoc!

Pest Trivia

Carpenter ants were responsible for a recent house fire in Daytona Beach, Florida. The ants had built a large nest around an electrical outlet. Eventually they electrically grounded themselves, causing a fire with flames that shot out of the electrical outlet. No people were hurt, but nine cats died in the fire.

Anaphylactic reactions to bites by insects are highly allergic reactions that can be life-threatening if not treated. About 1% of children and 3% of adults are highly allergic to bee, wasp, and ant stings. Anaphylaxis was discovered in 1901, but of course it has been a long-standing problem. The earliest recording of an allergic and fatal reaction to an insect bite dates back to ancient Egypt (3300 to 2640 BC), when the Pharaoh Menes was stung and killed, apparently by a hornet.

Your Questions Answered

Q. How widespread are foodborne illnesses?

A. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), tainted food sickens an estimated **76 million Americans** each year, resulting in **325,000 hospitalizations** and **5,000 deaths**. The vast majority of food poisoning cases involve only diarrhea and vomiting, which most people do not report to their doctor.



Foodborne bacteria, viruses, and parasites are the most common causes of food poisoning. The primary known offenders are *campylobacter* bacteria in contaminated, undercooked chicken, *salmonella* in contaminated, undercooked eggs and many other foods, *E. coli*, in contaminated meats, produce and drinking water, and the *Norwalk-like viruses* in shellfish. Many more foodborne illnesses are of unknown origin.

The CDC reminds us that we all need 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 on food, utensils, and food preparation surfaces.

Another Recluse Spider

The *Mediterranean recluse spider*, a species native to the European/North African region, has now spread to at least 22 states. This species was widely believed to have less potent venom than its well-known relative, the *brown recluse spider*. But recent tests of the venom on mice and rabbits have shown that its venom is just as potent as the brown recluse, whose bite can cause wounds with severe skin necrosis.



A recent report (*American Entomologist*, Fall 2009) found an abundant infestation of the Mediterranean recluse spider in many Washington, D.C. area government buildings. It typically inhabits out-of-the-way areas on the first floor and basement areas, especially in utility and mechanical rooms. Fortunately there have not been reports of bites by this spider in these buildings—apparently because the spider is extremely nonaggressive and normally lives in hidden and in remote spots.

Silent Night, Holy Night



If it weren't for destructive mice, a favorite Christmas carol, "Silent Night, Holy Night", would never have been shared with the world. Here's how it happened:

Just before Christmas in 1818, in the small town of Oberndorf, Austria, Father Joseph Mohr discovered to his horror that mice had chewed up the bellows of the church organ, making it unusable.

To have something appropriate to play, Father Mohr and his friend Franz Gruber took a poem Mohr had written earlier, and worked together on a simple melody that could be played on a guitar. Working all night, these two men produced the song. On the following night, Christmas Eve, the new Christmas carol was sung for the first time in public, accompanied by the instrument still undamaged by mice—a guitar.

