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The Pest Bulletin

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Holiday Pests Getting Busy

Holidays, and the time before and after them, are busy enough without the added stress of dealing with pest infestations. Regular pest control is important during this time of the year because of all the pest problems homeowners encounter. Here are a few of them.

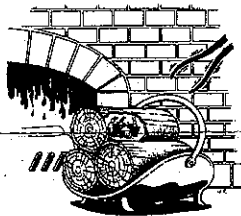
Fall and winter invaders are actively looking for a warmer, drier place to spend the winter. These include rats and mice, to name just a couple.

Holiday feast pests are those that feed on morsels of food left out overnight, on floors, or not properly disposed of. They include mice, rats, cockroaches, ants, and others. Prepare the kitchen at

night by sealing leftovers, placing food trash in garbage cans with tight-fitting lids, and cleaning the dishes, or leaving them in a sink filled with soapy water.

Christmas tree pests sneak indoors hidden in fresh Christmas trees. They include spiders, aphids, beetles, and many others. Some of these are in a sluggish state in the cold, but once the tree is indoors they start becoming very active. Try rinsing the tree with a strong jet of water before you bring it indoors.

Firewood pests are pests hidden in firewood. Like Christmas tree pests, they



start crawling and flying about once they are brought into a warm room. Plan to use all firewood brought inside each day. Outdoors, store firewood in a dry place, off the ground, and preferably away from your home.

Pests from travels and overnight guests. Bedbugs can crawl into a suitcase, or even into your pocket, and start a new infestation. Call us if you think you have these pests; it is important that they be controlled by a professional, and hopefully before they have had a chance to spread.

Unusual Cockroach Facts

* Here's where the English word 'cockroach' comes from. In 1624 Captain John Smith in the new Virginia Colony wrote about a bug that was creeping into chests and eating and defiling the contents "with their ill-scented dung." He called them a "cacarootch," a name he must have misheard from his Spanish contemporaries, who called these insects "cucarachas." By the mid-eighteenth century, Smith's word had become "cock-roche." Around 1900, Americans started shortening this word, calling it simply a "roach."



Captain John Smith

* Some people are allergic to chocolate (unfortunately!), but they may in fact not be allergic to the cocoa or other intentional ingredients, but to pulverized cockroach parts that somehow got into the chocolate. The Food and

Drug Administration allows up to 60 insect pieces per 100 grams of chocolate (about 30 pieces per chocolate bar) as harmless. Actually the average is believed to be only 8 pieces. A small number of insect parts are allowed in other foods as well.

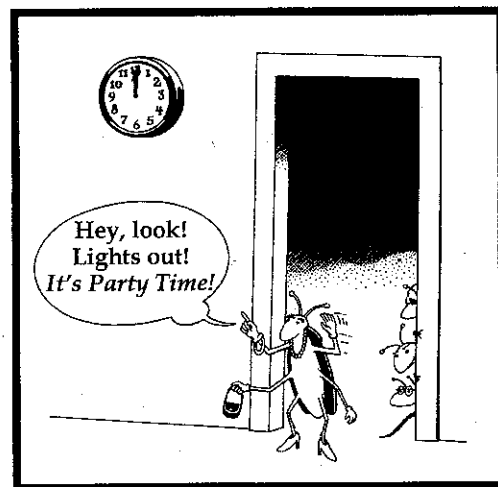
* Cockroaches can learn to navigate mazes after only five or six trials, however they do not have long memories, and need to be retrained.

* The title for the world's longest cockroach now goes to a new species discovered in a cave in Indonesia that measures a full 4 inches long.

* The first cockroach in space was a stow-away aboard the Apollo 12 command module, the Yankee Clipper, in 1969. The cockroach was spotted inside the space capsule before it took off and was never seen again. Who knows, maybe it jumped ship from the lunar module!

We want to take this opportunity to thank all of our valued customers for your business. We appreciate the opportunity to serve you and "make a difference" in your lives and the communities we live and work in.

We wish you and yours a
**Healthy, Happy, Prosperous
& Bug-free New Year!**



Flesh-Eating Cricket Discovered

A bizarre new species of cricket was recently discovered by a film crew in a cave in Venezuela. The cricket is believed to be the apex, or alpha, predator in its environment. At one point the cricket "nearly ripped off a chunk of its handler's thumb".

The cricket is not only unique in being predatory, but it is also unique in its ability to swim. It can actually swim underwater, using its front legs in a breaststroke and its hind legs kicking out.

The cricket was found two miles down into the cave network. *We say, leave them there!*



West Nile Virus Update

As of mid October, there have been 4,531 cases of mosquito-transmitted West Nile Virus in 48 states, and 183 deaths—the most since a 2003 outbreak.

Since the virus first arrived in North America in New York City in 1999, more than 30,000 people have been reported as sick from this virus. Many cases go unreported.

Stealth Behavior In Cockroaches

New research explores the amazing ability of cockroaches to evade predators by disappearing quickly under a ledge. A research studying the common American cockroach found that this cockroach can run full speed toward a ledge, dive off, grab the edge with its claws—sometimes using only one leg—and swing like a pendulum under the ledge.

This sharp u-turn subjects the roach to 3 to 5 times the force of gravity, similar to what humans feel at the bottom of a bungee jump.



Previous research showed that when cockroaches run fast they actually rear up on their hind legs, like bipedal humans. Amazingly, they quickly reach speeds of up to 50 body lengths per second, which is equivalent to a couple hundred miles per hour.

These incredible evasive techniques, which can occur at the simple flick of a light switch or a wisp of puffed air, make cockroaches remarkably good at escaping predators as well as staying out of sight.



Increasing Seabird Habitat

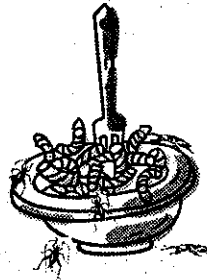
Rats are major predators of ground-nesting birds. When these predators invade an island they typically decimate populations of defenseless seabirds nesting there, including many endangered species. An exciting development in recent years has been the total eradication of rats on a number of smaller islands around the world through major rat baiting programs, followed by the return of nesting seabirds.

The most ambitious project yet was started last year—a baiting program designed to rid the largest island ever of rats, 105 mile-long South Georgia Island in the Antarctic. Specially formulated baits, new technologies, and a major investment, have all come together to make this project possible. Baiting and monitoring is scheduled to continue through 2015, and if successful, will re-open enough rat-free habitat for many millions of breeding seabirds.

Man Dies After Winning Roach-Eating Contest

A 32-year-old Florida man died after winning a contest that required contestants to eat live crickets, worms, and cockroaches. Edward Archbold had eaten bugs before, but this time he collapsed shortly after the contest ended, in front of the pet store that sponsored the contest. He was rushed to the hospital but pronounced dead.

The cause of death is unknown. The bugs had been raised as food for reptiles. If the bugs were carrying pathogenic bacteria, entomologists reason, the man's death would not have happened so quickly. Also, of the 30 participants in the contest, only one person died. There is a much stronger possibility the man was allergic to the cockroach allergens and went into anaphylactic shock.



Biting Ladybugs

In recent years the Asian lady beetle, or "ladybug", has become a more serious fall invader of homes. This harmless-looking insect originated from eastern Asia. As these beetles have spread around the country, a very curious thing has happened—the incidence of reported ladybug bites has also increased. Yes, *ladybugs!* Ladybugs feed on aphids and other soft-bodied insects, so it is unclear why they bite people. Fortunately the bugs don't transmit any diseases, and the bites are not that common, but their bites can be annoying.

The question that has been on many entomologist's minds is whether we are seeing more reports of ladybugs biting because this species is more likely to bite than other ladybugs, or just because there are so many more of them invading homes.

A recent study reported in the journal *American Entomologist* has answered this question. In the study, the experimenter's hand and forearm was placed in cages with different species of ladybugs.

The results showed that in any population of ladybugs, only a small percentage bite, and that Asian ladybugs actually bite less often than our native species of ladybugs. The Asian lady beetle has been the main culprit in biting incidents simply because there have been so many of these beetles invading homes.

