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## The Pest Bulletin

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# Fall Pest Invasions

While the weather is gradually changing during the months ahead, many kinds of pests begin looking for a suitable place to spend the fall and winter. And "guests" is too kind a word for them!

For many of these pests, homes and other buildings may seem perfect—there are lots of cracks and crevices that provide protection from rain and cold. But apparently they mistake the warmth and lights further indoors for spring-time conditions. As a result, many fall invaders gradually creep further inside rather than staying near the exterior. During the

winter and early spring they suddenly start popping out into living areas. Usually these pests dry out and die inside homes, but they can become a real problem staining curtains, stinking up the house, spoiling food, etc. Some even set off smoke alarms as they cluster inside these devices.

Common pests that work their way indoors in the fall include the new *Asian lady beetle* and even newer *stink bug*, *cluster flies*, *crickets*, *boxelder bugs*, *elm leaf beetles*, *overwintering wasps*, *clover*



Boxelder Bug

*mites*, and *others*. *Ants* sometimes move their entire colony indoors. (*Mice* and *rats*, a totally different kind of pest problem, also invade in fall and winter.)

A few fall invaders can be vacuumed up. If there are lots of them, they can be sprayed indoors. Caulking cracks around the outside of a home is a good idea too. Our regular treatments are needed to prevent these pests from invading in the fall and winter. With some pests, additional special treatments are needed.

## Rats & Mice Are Coming Indoors!

**Look Out!** You can bet rats and mice are casing each neighborhood. Homes can seem like a paradise to these invading pests! Rodents are seeking shelter in large numbers now and during the months ahead, as the weather cools. Indoors they find a warmer, drier place, with food, to spend the winter.



leave pet food out overnight and never allow bird seed to accumulate under bird feeders—every night rats and mice visit below these feeders, especially if they are finding food there. Also **store human food** in a way that rodents can't get to it.

✓ **Remove piles** of trash, junk, and lumber outdoors.

**Practicing good sanitation and habitat modification** can greatly reduce the number of rats and mice that find their way indoors. The objectives are to deny rodents access to food, water, and shelter. This is important because rodents wander around outdoors, and then choose to take up residence where their needs are met.

Here are some important tips that can help prevent rodent problems:

✓ **Use tight-fitting lids** on outdoor garbage cans and any indoor cans that contain food waste.

✓ **Store pet food** in covered metal, glass, or heavy plastic containers. Don't

**Get rid of clutter** in garages, basements, and storage rooms.

✓ **Seal or block** holes and cracks where rodents can get indoors.

✓ **Cut back** vines and shrubs so they are well away from outside walls. **Lower** the height of ground covers such as ivy, because tall, thick groundcovers provide cover for rodents.

Call us if you have problems with these nasty pests!

## Pest Prevention Tip of the Month

**A**nually check weather-stripping around all exterior doors, including your garage door, to make sure there are no cracks pests can enter when the doors are closed. Rodents and insects are wandering about outside, and they are attracted to the smells and better temperatures indoors.



The dream marathon runner...  
through the eyes of a shoe salesman!

## Huge West Nile Virus Outbreak

By late August, the *West Nile virus* outbreak had become the largest ever seen in the United States since the virus was first detected in this country in 1999. According to the *Centers for Disease Control and Prevention*, 66 people have already died this year, and infections have occurred in 43 states, and the numbers are rising weekly.



Birds are the most common reservoir for the virus. Mosquitoes transmit the virus to humans after they become infected, usually by biting an infected bird.

Fortunately, most mosquitoes do not carry West Nile virus, and most people, even when bitten by an infected mosquito, do not get sick.

To protect yourself and loved ones, it is important that you drain any standing water mosquitoes may be breeding in around your yard, wear DEET mosquito repellent when outdoors, be especially careful at dusk and dawn when mosquitoes are most active, and wear long pants and long sleeves when practical.

Call us if you want to have your yard treated for mosquitoes; just be aware that more mosquitoes can fly or be blown in.



## Bed Bugs in the News

① According to a recently published survey, there was an uptick in bed bug activity in 2011, but *New York* was replaced by *Cincinnati* as the top bed bug city, followed by *Chicago*, *Detroit*, *Denver*, and *Los Angeles*.

② One woman who tried to treat bed bugs herself in an apartment this summer accidentally started a fire. About 30 people lost their homes, and four people were taken to the hospital for smoke inhalation. Fortunately no one lost their lives.

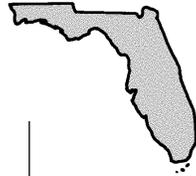
The woman doused her couch in alcohol to try to get rid of bed bugs. She then accidentally dropped a cigarette onto the couch, starting the fire.

This kind of tragic incident shows again that calling a professional to control bed bugs, as soon as they are discovered, is the best way to deal with these blood suckers.

③ Four police vehicles were taken out of service for several days in Pennsylvania while they were treated for possible bed bug contamination. This is becoming more common around the country, and is often done as a precautionary measure and a courtesy for the officers.



## Monstrous Python Found



The largest *Burmese python* ever discovered outdoors in the U.S. was discovered this summer in Florida. The monstrous constrictor was an amazing 17.7 feet long and was carrying 87 eggs, also a new record.

Burmese pythons of this size can eat almost any native animal in Florida, including endangered Florida panthers. They grow largest where food is plentiful, and in fact a recent study has showed that these snakes are causing the decline of a wide range of native species. The snakes, originally imported and kept as pets, either escaped or were dumped into the wild in the 1990's. Efforts are underway to attempt to stop their spread.



## Spider Man's Creation

In the early 1960's Stan Lee, the creator of *Spider Man*, wanted to create a new kind of superhero. He had already created successes such as *Captain America*, *The Fantastic Four*, *Thor*, and *The Incredible Hulk*, but he was looking for a superhero kids could identify with. He wanted a different kind of superhero—one with a new set of superhuman powers, yet an average guy with problems of insecurity, loneliness, awkwardness, and girl troubles.

Lee saw a spider crawling up a wall, and an idea began to take shape. "I figured if a guy can stick to walls and walk like an insect..." The name Spider-Man was born from that sighting.

The problem was, Marvel Comic's publisher thought it was the dumbest idea he had ever heard. A teenage superhero? With adolescent problems? And pimples?

The idea for the new superhero would have died right there and never made it into comic books, except that Lee eventually convinced Marvel to publish the story in the last issue of a cancelled comic book series called *Amazing Fantasy*. The rest is history... in March 1963 the comic book hit the shelves, and while *Amazing Fantasy* has now been extinct for nearly 50 years, *Spider-Man* continues to evolve and be popular today.



## New Spider Discovered

For the first time since 1870 in North America, a new spider species representing an entire new family of spiders has been discovered. The spiders, about the size of a half dollar, were discovered in a cave in southern Oregon.

The new family has been named *Trogloraptor*, or cave robber, because of its oversize front claws. It is notable that since such a large and bizarre spider went undiscovered for so long, there must be many more species waiting to be discovered right here in the USA!



*Trogloraptor*