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The Pest Bulletin

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Important Home Safety

An astounding 2.3 MILLION accidental poisonings occur each year in this country. Most of these involve poisons improperly stored around the home, and 64% of the poisonings occur in children under the age of six. Half of the poisonings are caused by swallowing medicines. If you have young children, or young children visit your home, follow these important safety tips to help prevent poisonings.



Become aware of poisonous substances in your home. These include medicines and iron pills,

furniture polish, bleach, disinfectants, and other cleaners, plus items like antifreeze, lighter fluid, and gasoline, as well as pest sprays, repellents, and baits.

Never leave a child unattended around household products or medications. Some poisonings occur very quickly. For instance, a parent involved in an activity such as cleaning turns away for a minute, and finds that the child has gotten into the cleaning products.

Keep medicines in locked cabinets, or at least in a higher cabinet, out of

reach and sight of small children.

Keep all household poisons and medicines in their original, properly labeled, child-resistant containers. Never use an old soda bottle or glass to store something poisonous.

Reduce the number of pesticides stored around your home and garage (using our services helps you avoid buying such products). Store these products not under the kitchen sink, but in a garage or shed in a cabinet inaccessible to small children, and preferably locked.

Pest Prevention Tip of the Month

One way pests (and cold air) enter a home is through cracks around garage doors. On a bright day you can see the cracks from the inside of the garage when the lights are off. Eliminate these cracks with various seals and weatherstripping available at hardware stores.

Insects Ready for a Spring Comeback!

Just like Arnold Schwarzenegger ominously stating "I'll Be Back!" in the movie *Terminator*, insect problems that seem to have gone away in the winter come right back again with a vengeance

when the weather warms in spring and summer.

Cold weather isn't a problem for insects. When outdoors they spend their time in protected places, such as cracks and crevices in homes and under bark and rocks, and under the siding of homes. There they go into a kind of hibernation. The fat content of their bodies increases and the amount of water decreases. Even more vital—their bodies start producing their own glycerol, which acts as a protective antifreeze in their blood.

Many insects overwinter outdoors as eggs—the most cold-resistant stage. But some survive as larvae, pupae, or adults. The entire colony of yellow-jackets and wasps dies off in all but the warmest areas, except for impregnated females that start new colonies in the spring. These females hibernate in protected places. Ants and bees survive by clustering together to help regulate their temperature.

Some insects overwinter inside homes in wall voids and other cracks and crevices. When warm weather arrives, they begin moving about, sometimes in large numbers, looking for a way out. Pests that can spend the entire year indoors, like cockroaches, can continue right through the winter, though they may be less active.



Ticks Survive Laundering

Laundering has always been recommended for killing ticks that remain on clothing after returning from tick-infested areas. However, ticks can survive laundering, according to new tests reported in the September, 2003, issue of the *Journal of Medical Entomology*.

Working with both lone star ticks and blacklegged ticks, it was found that over 95% of tick nymphs survived cold and warm wash cycles in a washing machine. When the washer was set on hot, 95% of the lone star ticks and 65% of the blacklegged ticks survived. Using various liquid and powdered detergents did not greatly change the results.



In the dryer set at high heat for one hour, all ticks were killed, but with unheated air many ticks of both species survived. Of course, there are many different brands of washers and dryers with different settings, and these tests didn't look at all the differences. But it is clear that washing will not rid clothes of ticks, whereas drying at high heat for one hour will.

Carpenter Ant Findings



Using new electronic counting devices, it was shown that carpenter ants mass at their nest entrance shortly after sunset. When conditions are dark enough, they stream out of the nest, going back and forth until just before sunrise. As days get longer in the spring, the ants emerge later from the nest. Temperature has a great effect on the number of ants foraging—more ants come out on warmer nights than on colder nights. Also, more ants are out searching when there is less food available.

Your Questions Answered



Q. I use mothballs in my closet and still get holes in my clothes. What's wrong?

A. The mild smell of mothballs is not enough to kill clothes moths and carpet beetles, and some studies have shown that it doesn't even do a good job repelling them. Mothballs are only effective when they are used in an airtight container in sufficient quantity.

Only under these conditions can the fumes build up to the concentration necessary to repel or kill an insect.

Cedar likewise works only in an airtight situation like a very tightly constructed cedar chest. But after a year or two, most of the natural scent is gone and the cedar wood no longer has any affect on insects.

5 More Benefits of Our Services

As we professionally control pests, we are proud to be serving an important role "protecting your property, health, and the environment." Among over 100 benefits of using our pest management services, here are five that relate to your health:

1. We reduce the chance you'll contract some kind of *food poisoning* from germs carried by roaches, flies, mice, ants, etc.
2. We reduce your risk of being *stung or bitten* by wasps, bees, spiders, rats, ticks, ants, etc.
3. We help reduce the potential to be *embarrassed* by a home infested with roaches, mice, and other nasty pests.
4. We help reduce your risk of *allergy* to pests like fleas, cockroaches, etc.
5. We increase your *peace-of-mind* because you encounter fewer feared or despised pests such as spiders and rats.

TRIVIA

● The World Record for **spitting a cricket** is now an incredible 37 feet! Last August, 40 contestants tried to beat that record at the *New Jersey Pest Management Association Clambake & Cricket-Spitting Contest*. The winner spit his dead cricket 28 feet, 5¾ inches. That, in itself, seems like an incredible and daring feat, considering there was an oncoming wind the contestants had to spit into.

● A **shoplifter** in Kansas City recently brought honey bees into a department store to create a diversion. Store security spotted the man going into the restroom with merchandise. When they opened the door, an estimated 100 bees buzzed out, and the shoplifter yelled something like "Bees, bees!" He escaped in the ensuing confusion.

● **Squirrels** are notorious for hiding nuts and then forgetting about them. Those forgotten nuts often germinate, helping forests regenerate. But recent findings prove that some squirrels help forests more than others. Gray squirrels tend to bury their nuts, and their forgotten nuts have high germination rates. Red squirrels, however, often pile their nuts in above-ground caches where the seeds are more likely to dry out or be eaten. Walnuts gathered by gray squirrels are *seven times* more likely to germinate than those gathered by red squirrels.

