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The Pest Bulletin

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On-Going Service Protects Best

Why is regular, on-going professional pest management service so important? While some pests multiply more slowly this time of year, others are even more active now. On-going service provides the best protection against a wide variety of invading pests, and is your best value.

Rats and mice are especially troublesome at this time of year. Each year over **20 million households** in the U.S. fight winter rodent infestations. These pests have eaten and multiplied outdoors during the warmer months, and now are looking for warmer, drier

shelter. Homes, garages and sheds not only provide needed shelter, they often have plenty of food as well.

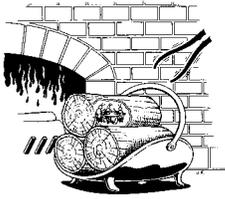
Mice and rats don't just eat and contaminate your food, they can transmit diseases, are a source of allergens, and can chew through wiring and insulation, which causes further damage and occasional fires.

Many other pests continue to multiply and cause damage indoors, including ants, cockroaches, clothes moths and carpet beetles, stored food pests, fleas, spiders, and others. You



may even inadvertently carry home some of these pests in shopping bags, etc.

On-going service can catch all these problems early, preventing expensive pest damage and making your home safer and more comfortable. Another great benefit of having fewer pests and their damage and droppings—it makes cleaning and maintaining a home easier! We all can use that during the busy holiday season ahead!



Firewood Storage is Critical This Year

As electricity and gas prices rise dramatically this winter, fireplaces will be used more than ever. Nothing is more enjoyable than sitting and being warmed by a home fire on a cold day, but firewood storage and use can bring on its own set of pest problems if not done properly.

When you bring firewood indoors on a cold day, the warmth awakens pests hiding in the wood. They respond to spring-like temperatures, and begin actively flying or crawling around the room. A firewood pile can harbor all sorts of pests, including ants, termites, crickets, mice, millipedes, centipedes, spiders, yellowjackets, flies, and wood-boring beetles. Bringing firewood indoors can be like having your

very own zoo filled with uninvited creepy, crawly creatures!

You can avoid the "zoo affect" by inspecting and shaking wood before you bring it in, and by carrying in only what you will burn within the next few hours.

Stack and store outdoor firewood properly to reduce pest problems. Keep the firewood pile dry by covering it with plastic or a simple roof, and by placing concrete blocks or 2x4s under the pile to hold it up off the ground. It's best to store the wood 10 to 20 feet away from your home, but if you do store it closer, never pile it against your house—it may keep the wall more moist, and pests can crawl directly from the firewood onto your home.

Pest Prevention Tip of the Month

Now is a good time to inspect your gutters and clean out leaves and twigs. A host of insect pests, including ants and earwigs, breed in this debris, and it can also clog up the drain and cause water to spill over the sides of your gutters, causing water damage and attracting more pests.



Plague Traced to Ancient Egypt



The dreaded plague that spread across Europe in the 14th century and killed 25 million people is still present in this country and around the world. About 3,000 cases of plague occur each year worldwide. The disease is essentially a disease of rats that is picked up by fleas, then transmitted to humans when the fleas bite. In the highly contagious pneumonic form of the disease, bacteria invade a person's lungs, then are exhaled into the air where others inhale them and become ill.

It has long been thought that plague originally came from central Asia along with black (roof) rats, but recent excavations of 3,000-year-old Egyptian cities suggest it probably came from the Nile River area. Researchers excavating ancient sites have found fleas that are known carriers of the disease, along with Nile rats, a favorite host of the fleas. From there the disease likely spread to black rats, which as stowaways on trading ships eventually spread it throughout the world.

Incredibly, Egyptian writings from 3,500 years ago describe an outbreak of plague. It states, "...has produced a bubo, and the pus has petrified, the disease has hit".

Old Wives' Tale—True?

There is an old wives' saying that when house flies bite, it's going to rain. Part of this ancient wisdom is actually true, and part false. House flies cannot bite, but their relatives, stable flies, can. It is now well known that stable flies more actively bite and seek a blood meal as the barometer pressure drops prior to a storm.

Thank You!

We want to thank our long-term customers, and those who joined us this year, for your valued business. We really appreciate you! Many of you also refer new customers to us—thank you!

We want to be among the first to wish you both "Happy Holidays" and a "Healthy and Prosperous New Year!"

Your Questions Answered



Q. How big is the world's largest cockroach?

A. We've received calls from some people who swear they've seen roaches the size of a Volkswagen Beetle! But many people would guess the largest cockroach alive is the *giant Madagascar hissing cockroach*. These are the most common cockroaches seen in horror movies, and they can reach an incredible 2-3 inches at maturity. But *Australian giant burrowing cockroaches* are actually larger. These grow to 3½ inches long,

and weigh about the same as a parakeet. Not to be outdone, the *giant cave cockroach* grows 3 to almost 4 inches long at maturity, and a very respectable 1½ inches wide.

Now a *new cockroach* has been discovered that is even larger! It hasn't even been named yet, but it measures a **full 4 inches in length!** Discovered deep inside caves in Borneo, this is now the largest cockroach, and all cockroach trivia web pages that name other cockroaches are outdated.



Sea Birds Making a Comeback

Here's a happy story. Black rats, which invaded Anacapa Island off the coast of Southern California about 100 years ago, had caused a serious decline in sea bird populations at this important nesting site. In fact, two bird species that nest on the island were creeping close to extinction. Rats eat the eggs and young of any birds they can reach, and ground-nesting birds are especially vulnerable.

But in December, 2001, all that changed when a carefully executed, massive rodent-baiting program of the entire 10 acre island was conducted. The rats were completely exterminated. Within a year the sea bird populations began to bounce back, and are at healthy, normal levels still today.

Did You Know?

- **Robins**, not crows, may be the most important bird carriers of West Nile Virus. A new study of 300 mosquitoes trapped over the past three years in Connecticut found crow's blood in only one percent of the mosquitoes, but robin's blood in 40 percent of the mosquitoes. Tests in North Carolina had similar results. West Nile Virus was first reported in New York in 1999. Cases have now been reported in 48 states, and there have been 668 deaths.
- **Scientists** have identified Chinese horseshoe bats as the primary carriers for the feared Sudden Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) virus. In Asia, live bats are sold in open markets as food, and bat feces are used in traditional medicine. The virus outbreak spread widely and killed nearly 800 people worldwide in 2002 and 2003.

