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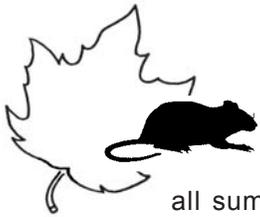
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Fall Invading Pests

Pests have been multiplying outdoors all summer, and as the weather changes in the fall, the need for professional pest control services increases as many of these unwanted creatures begin invading homes. These "guests" are looking for a more suitable place to spend the winter, but they don't bother asking for your permission!

Rats and mice are among these fall invaders. They cause more problems in the fall than at any other time of year. Even homes and businesses that

have been rodent-free can start having problems with these pests in the fall, because by instinct they are actively seeking a more protected place to spend the winter. Indoors, where they have access to food and moisture, is highly desirable shelter for them.

A wide variety of insects and mites invade in the fall. Whole colonies of some kinds of **ants** may move from outdoors to indoors or beneath foundations. Other pests include **crickets, boxelder bugs, elm leaf beetles, root weevils, earwigs, certain mites** and **flies**, and the new **Asian**

lady beetle, to name just a few.

Sometimes you don't even notice these pests as they enter, because they remain hidden. But during a warm late fall or winter day, those that have gone into a resting stage may wake up prematurely. Thinking it's spring, they instinctively move toward light. Unfortunately the lights they are seeing are indoor lights, not sunlight, and they end up coming further indoors into kitchens and living areas, sometimes by the hundreds or thousands.

Asian Lady Beetles Invade

Asian lady beetles were brought into this country around 1980 to help control crop pests. They are indeed voracious predators of aphids and other crop pests, but there was an unexpected side effect—they started invading homes and other buildings in large numbers in the late summer and early fall. Unfortunately, these beetles have gradually become a major household pest.

Asian lady beetles are slightly larger than most other lady beetles. They vary in color from mustard-yellow to a dark reddish-orange, and have dark spots like other lady beetles.

New research shows that Asian lady beetles seek a place to spend the winter about five days after a dramatic drop in autumn temperatures. It was first thought that these beetles were



more attracted to light-colored houses, but now we know that the color has no effect on the buildings they choose to invade. It also now appears that having trees on any side of a home, but particularly the north side, increases the chances of being invaded by these beetles.

It's not just that Asian lady beetles are a nuisance when they come in and later when they try to get out; they cause other problems, too. A common complaint is their foul smell. They can stain surfaces that they crawl on, and occasionally will bite. Some people also have an allergic reaction to them.

These beetles can be kept out of a home with a special exterior wall treatment in late summer or early fall, before they begin invading.

Pest Prevention Tip of the Month

Watch that you don't inadvertently carry pests indoors! Check for pests when you bring in furniture, food, grocery bags, boxes, rolled up newspapers, and luggage. Also, check potted plants for pests underneath the pots, and for ant colonies in the soil.





Bat House Finally a Success

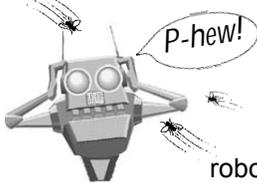
A \$20,000 bat house was built on the Gainesville campus of the University of Florida, and it's now home to about 100,000 bats. Mostly Mexican freetailed bats, they consume an estimated 1,000 pounds of lawn and landscaping pests each night.

The structure was built partly to lure bats away from other places on campus where they weren't wanted because of their smell, droppings, and the sounds they emit. It took about three years before bats finally started moving into the structure, despite the university trucking bats to it, and making it appear lived-in by sprinkling it with bat droppings and playing tapes of bat sounds.

The bat house is still being improved. During 2004, up to 20,000 bat pups fell out of it, and volunteers were needed to retrieve them and place them back in the bat house. New plywood slats were installed to help pups get a better grip, and it seems to be working.

An unexpected benefit has been that the bat house has become a campus attraction, drawing a regular audience for the animal's evening exodus.

This Robot Stinks!



A new drive to create robots that generate their own energy—called "release and forget" robots—has turned to flies as

a renewable energy source. That's right, flies are good for something!

The robot, named EcoBot I, has a trap that catches flies, which are then sucked into its digestion chambers. Bacteria break the flies down, and in the process release electrons that are harnessed to create an electric current.

EcoBot I doesn't move very fast—every 12 minutes it gets enough energy to move two centimeters and send back a transmission. But in one test it was able to travel for 5 days on just 8 fat flies. Ponder the possibilities!

These kinds of robots have a variety of uses, including testing for toxic gases and transmitting the results.

The big disadvantage? To attract enough flies, the robot uses a stinking lure, and it stinks *really bad*.

Your Questions Answered

Q. Why is the LCM virus in the news lately?

A. We normally hear very little about the rodent-borne LCMV (*Lymphocytic choriomeningitis virus*), but it killed seven people during the last year, and there may have been other undiagnosed cases. All seven known cases were recipients of organs from two donors that were infected with the virus. One of the donors was apparently infected by a pet hamster that tested positive for the virus; the other donor apparently contracted it from house mice. About 5% of house mice and pet rodents like hamsters carry LCMV.

About 2% of humans have antibodies to this virus, indicating they have been exposed to it at some point. People become infected by inhaling contaminated airborne particles of dried rodent urine and feces, by eating food contaminated with the virus, or by the virus entering cuts or other open wounds. Although the virus usually causes no (or very slight illness), it can be deadly for people with weak immune systems like cancer patients and transplant recipients.



Rats Gnaw Thru Cables

Rats gnawing on fiber-optic cable crippled telecommunications in part of New Zealand in June. The outage halted telephone and internet services, including the nation's stock exchange and electronic banking services, for four hours. Telecom buries its cables five feet deep, and where they must go above ground, they encase cables in steel pipe. Somehow the rats were able to get into the steel pipe where it crossed a bridge. A company representative said, "We employ the world's best practices in the technique of installing the cable" but "...they find a way in".

Did You Know?

- "Buzz Off", a North Carolina company, has successfully developed a method for producing clothes that repel bugs. They use permethrin, one of the synthetic versions of the natural repellent found in certain chrysanthemum flowers. The repellent is bound to the fibers of each garment, and according to the company, lasts up to 25 washings.
- Rocky Mountain spotted fever, a wide-spread tick-transmitted disease, has exploded from 365 human cases in 1998 to 1,514 cases last year. While the American dog tick and the Rocky Mountain wood tick are the usual ticks that transmit this disease, the common brown dog tick has been the recent culprit in Arizona. The brown dog tick prefers to feed on dogs, but will readily try feeding on humans. Unfortunately, this tick can live its entire life indoors.

