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Pests Invade in Fall

Now and during the months ahead the weather starts a gradual change, causing changes in pest problems as well. Some of these fall invading pests have already begun looking for food indoors, or a more protected place to spend the winter. Unfortunately, homes and other buildings are exactly what many of the fall invaders are looking for.



aggressively for ways to get indoors.

Lady bugs, particularly the multi-colored Asian lady beetle pictured at left, can become very abundant. This insect was introduced to control crop pests, and then starting unexpectedly becoming an indoor pest. Some people are allergic to this beetle when it invades in large numbers.

Wasp and yellowjacket queens overwinter in protected places, and start new colonies in the spring.

Many kinds of **crickets** invade homes, sometimes in large numbers.

Ant colonies are huge this time of year, and some species become more aggressive invaders.

Other common fall invaders include **elm leaf beetles, boxelder bugs, cluster flies, earwigs, root weevils, cockroaches, sowbugs, pillbugs, millipedes, and centipedes.**

It's during these months ahead that McKinzie's professional pest management services are especially important to protect you, your home, belongings, and pets, from pests that can cause damage or are health risks.

Boxelder Bugs - A Fall Invader



These insects can migrate in massive numbers during the fall to warm sides of homes, and eventually move indoors as the weather

cools. Late summer and early fall, while these pests are still outdoors, is an excellent time to have us control them. Once they get in, they tend to scatter throughout the house, and then crawl about on warm days during winter and early spring.

Boxelder bugs rarely bite, and don't eat anything indoors, but as they crawl about, their excrement show up as ugly spots on curtains and other fabrics. They emit a strong, foul smell when crushed.

Boxelder bugs are black or dark brown with bright orange-red lines on their backs and wings. Sometimes huge masses of them congregate on a tree trunk or wall.



They become most abundant where there is a female (seed-bearing) boxelder tree. They also feed on male boxelder trees, maples, and some other plants, but the populations on these are much smaller. Boxelder bugs may fly as far as two miles in search of a building or other sheltered, dry place to spend the winter, but most of them overwinter near their food plant.

You can greatly reduce future infestations of boxelder bugs by removing the pod-bearing trees they breed in. But since tree removal is often not a desirable option, it's a good idea to at least remove leaves and other debris from around the foundation, and seal up any cracks or openings you can find in your foundation and around doors and windows. Taking these steps will assist our control measures.

Pest Prevention Tip of the Month

Fall is a good time to be sure your downspouts flow freely. Clogged downspouts can cause gutters to back up, spilling water over and causing moisture problems. First flush the downspouts with a hose. If one still seems to be clogged, you can easily clear it with a plumber's snake, going from the bottom up.





Lyme Disease News

In August it was revealed that President Bush had been treated for Lyme disease last year.

The President's main form of exercise and recreational activity is mountain biking, which brings him in contact with ticks. Last year he noticed a small rash (a small red rash, often in the form of a "bull's-eye", is characteristic of the initial stages of Lyme disease).

Tick-transmitted Lyme disease cases have more than doubled in the last 15 years, to over **20,000 new cases** each year, and that's a fraction of the many Lyme cases that go undiagnosed. People who aren't treated promptly can develop painful symptoms, but most patients, like President Bush, can take antibiotics for a few weeks and are cured. Early diagnosis and treatment are essential.

Formosan Termite Study

Formosan termites damage both wooden structures and trees. They are now in 11 states and gradually spreading, already costing a staggering **\$1 billion per year** in this country. A study of Formosan termites in New Orleans, reported in the recent *Journal of Economic Entomology*, found that in a four year period an astounding 18 colonies had infested the Supreme Court Building there.

This high number of colonies is surprising because previous studies of subterranean termites have found just one or two colonies infest a structure at a time. But the other studies have generally been conducted in less disturbed, more stable, park-like settings, while the courthouse setting is the first one to have more disturbances in the form of remodeling, landscaping changes, and nearby treatments. More research is needed, but the study suggests that movement of termites into

homes and other man-made structures occurs more often in the disturbed environments common around homes than in less disturbed, park-like settings.



Severed Snake Head Bites Man

A man in rural Washington state recently was bitten by the decapitated head of a rattlesnake. The man had whacked off the head of the five-foot snake with a shovel, but when he reached to pick up the snake, the dead snake's severed head twisted around and bit him on his finger. He was rushed to the hospital, where anti-venom shots were administered just as the man's tongue was starting to swell.



The story sounds like one of those 'urban legends', but the truth is dead snakes are responsible for about 15% of all snake bites. Rattlesnakes have a natural reflex-striking action that makes them dangerous for up to 60 minutes after they have died. There have even been reports of people getting a dose of venom by scratching themselves on the fangs of long-dead rattlesnakes.

Bird Mites' Bites!



The northern fowl mite is a serious pest of chickens in this country, but it will also bite people. When a house sparrow or other bird builds a nest in a gutter or on the side of a building, these mites can become a problem. The nests are abandoned after the chicks mature, and it's then that the mites begin crawling around, and may start biting humans. Because of the short generation time of only 5-7 days, northern fowl mites can become abundant—22,000 of them have been recorded in a single bird nest.

A new study of the northern fowl mite has found that this pest feeds on many more bird species than previously thought. The most complete list of host birds previously listed only 15 North American bird species; it has now been found on 72 bird species, according to an article in the most recent *Journal of Medical Entomology*. The northern fowl mite is one of 3,000 mites and ticks that infest birds.

Did You Know?

✓ **ANGEL STADIUM** in Anaheim, California, with a seating capacity of 45,050, accumulates about 15 tons of garbage during an average game, according to stadium officials. This refuse typically sits overnight for more than 12 hours before it is collected, a practice that contributes to pest problems. In fact, there have been a startling 118 rodent and insect violations logged by health inspectors there over the last 2½ years. As a result, the Angels are changing their cleaning schedule so the stadium is cleaned immediately after a game rather than the next morning.

✓ **"OUTDOOR ROOMS"** have become all the rage in recent years, with homeowners building outdoor living areas featuring expensive kitchens, furniture and even plasma TVs. But these areas are prone to have more pest problems and require more pest control services. Rodents, ants, yellowjackets, mosquitoes, and even snakes are just some of the pests that cause problems in these areas.

