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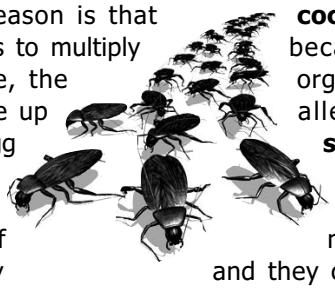
MAY/JUNE 2017
Pest Patrol News

Summer-Time Pests Are Coming

Summer-time and hordes of pests go hand in hand. One reason is that warm weather causes pests to multiply much faster. For instance, the common house fly can take up to *6 weeks* to grow from egg to adult fly in cool weather, but in warm weather this takes only *6 days!* Many of these pests find their way into homes.



While these pests aren't big and impressive like bears and alligators, they nevertheless cause serious damage and health problems. They also can be a nuisance and an embarrassment. Among the summer pests we encounter are **cockroaches** (a health hazard because of the many disease organisms they carry, and the allergies they cause) and **silverfish**, which eat into books, magazines, and documents. **Ants** are the most common summer pest, and they cause all sorts of problems. Stored food pests like **flour beetles, moths,** and **mites** spoil stored human and pet food, and **rats and mice** are health hazards that spoil food and leave behind their droppings, urine, and hairs.

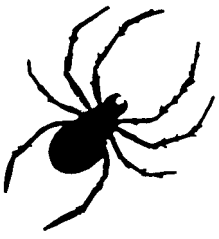
Other pests can inflict painful or irritating stings or bites or transmit diseases, including **fleas, ticks, spiders, mites, bees, wasps, bedbugs, mosquitoes** and others. Some pests, like **carpet beetles** and **clothes moths**, damage clothing, rugs, and other fabrics. **Carpenter ants**, **termites**, and other pests destroy wood in our homes.

Don't let any of these pests get the upper hand in your home! We are the area *pest management experts*. If you know anyone whose home is unprotected from constantly-invading pests, let them know we can help them!

Spiders and Their Venoms

Few creatures are feared as much as spiders. There are over 3,000 species of spiders in this country. Fortunately most of them can't penetrate our skin with their fangs. When they do bite people they either don't inject any venom, or not enough to affect us. Keep in mind, spiders do not actively seek out people to bite.

Nevertheless, there are two types of spider venom that can cause a serious reaction. The black widow and its cousins have a **neurotoxic venom**. This kind of venom can cause pain as well as muscle cramping, sweating, weakness, and breathing difficulties. Fatalities from their bites occur but are rare.



Brown recluse spiders have a **cytotoxic venom** that can result in a necrotic (ulcerating) wound that is slow to heal. Bites from these spiders are less common than it might seem. Research shows that many people who think they have been bitten by this kind of spider have not been. There are other things that can cause a necrotic wound. They include bites from other pests, as well as conditions completely unrelated to pests, such as certain kinds of bacterial and fungal infections, and ulcers from diabetes or bed sores.

Recent evidence shows that the common sac spiders, which many people believed caused necrotic wounds, don't cause those wounds at all. Their bites cause a sharp pain like a bee sting, so it is a neurotoxin.

We are the area experts at spider control. Keep in mind that reinfestations occur when young spiders catch a breeze and use it to "parachute" to your home on a silk strand. Also, some spiders are "hunting spiders" that frequently wander indoors.

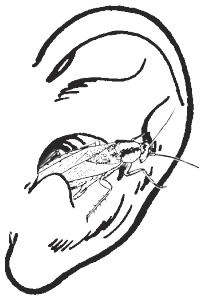
Pest Prevention Tip of the Month

Remove bird nests from eaves and branches touching your home immediately after the young birds stop using the nests. Various blood-sucking and scavenging bugs live in these nests, and leave the nests when the birds leave. These pests sometimes crawl into homes from the abandoned nests.

"Honey, maybe this pest problem is bigger than we thought!"

*For your convenience **ONLINE PAYMENTS** are now accepted at www.rescompestcontrol.com (Debit or Credit).*

What's That Bug in My Ear?



Another study has confirmed that cockroaches, not earwigs, are by far the most common insects that enter people's ears, according to the records of physicians who have extracted insects from people's ears.

The report, in the *South African Medical Journal*, studied insects removed from ears by South African hospital physicians over a two year period. Almost half of all insects removed from ears were cockroaches, followed by flies, beetles, moths, and a tick. Cockroaches usually enter people's ears at night as they sleep. More cockroaches were removed from the ears of children than adults.

These findings are similar to a 1998 study in a Los Angeles hospital, which found that over ¾ of all insects removed from ears at the hospital were cockroaches.

The Smell of Odorous House Ants

Odorous house ants are a common household ant throughout most of the U.S. They can easily be mistaken for other ants, except for their distinctive odor when crushed. The odor is often described on the internet as rotten coconuts or just coconuts, but various websites describe the ants as smelling like blue cheese, rancid butter, cleaner spray, and other scents.

So what do the ants ***really*** smell like? Recent tests were conducted that asked people to sniff and describe the ant's smell. *Blue cheese* was the most common scent chosen, with rotten coconuts the next most common choice.

Chemical analysis confirms the odor is closest to the smell of blue cheese. The distinctive scent of blue cheese is from the Penicillium mold in it. As coconuts start to rot, they too are colonized by Penicillium mold—which is why some people who are familiar with the scent of rotting coconuts identify that odor as how the ants smell.

Now you know what these ants really smell like, despite the variety of descriptions found on the internet!

Your Questions Answered

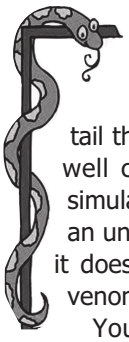
Q. Why do mosquito bites itch?

A. When a mosquito punctures your skin in search of a blood meal, she (only female mosquitoes bite—they need blood before they can produce a batch of eggs) also injects some saliva. The saliva contains several substances, including a very effective anticoagulant that prevents your blood from clotting while she sucks it up through a thin tube.

The first time we are bitten, nothing happens. But gradually our body becomes sensitized to the foreign proteins in the saliva and a small itchy red bump appears about 24 hours later. After many more bites, a pale, swollen hive or wheal appears minutes after the bite, in addition to the red bump 24 hours later. With repeated bites, some people stop reacting, and others become increasingly allergic and develop even larger bumps.

The bumps and itching are the result of our own immune system recognizing the saliva as a foreign substance and releasing histamine at the wound. It's actually our own histamine that makes us itch, not the mosquito's saliva.

Weird New Snake

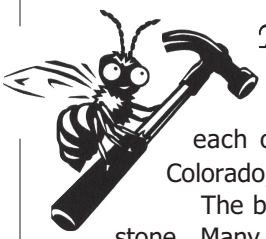


One of the strangest snakes was described as a new species in 2006. The *spider-tailed viper* is from Iran.

This snake has a spider-like appendage on the end of its tail that it uses to lure in birds. The deadly viper lies perfectly still, well camouflaged among the rocks, just moving its tail end to simulate a spider walking about. It's just a matter of time before an unsuspecting bird flies in to grab what looks like a spider. When it does, the viper bites the unfortunate bird and holds it while its venom slowly kills it.

YouTube has a fascinating video of this snake luring in and grabbing a bird.

New Bee Drills into Sandstone



An amazing, newly discovered bee species bores into solid sandstone and lays its eggs in it. These bees do not live in colonies. They are solitary, although they may eventually build many tunnels near each other. The bee has been found in Utah, southwest Colorado, and the Death Valley area of California.

The bees use their very hard mandibles to chew through the stone. Many of the older female bees of this species have mandibles that show significant wear and tear. The young bees that emerge from the tunnels apparently come back and lay their eggs in the same tunnels, and expand them.

No one knows how long it takes these bees to burrow into sandstone, but once a tunnel is built, it is much more permanent than the tunnels of bees that nest in dirt. Besides permanence, the tunnels appear to have other advantages. The tunnels harbor fewer microbial parasites than those in dirt, and they protect the bees from occasional flash floods better than tunnels built in dirt.