



Weather and Pests

The weather can have a huge impact on insect abundance and activity levels. If you pay attention to weather conditions (mainly temperature and humidity), you might be able to predict when certain pests will be problematic.

This summer, keep an eye out for two sets of conditions that can lead to an increase of indoor pests: extended periods of heavy rain (especially when combined with unseasonably cool temperatures) and stretches of hot, dry weather. In both cases, either an abundance or lack of water is driving this behavior.

Ants are known to seek refuge in places with more favorable conditions and can show up in unexpected places. If you notice an ant in your

home, let us know so we can take care of it and determine if it is just a stray worker or part of a newly relocated colony.

Mosquitoes are much more prevalent when there is plentiful rain, but their eggs are hardy enough to withstand an extended length of time without. Once rain comes, eggs hatch and their fast life cycle is underway. Some species only require a tiny amount of water for development. You can help reduce mosquitoes around your home by preventing standing water from accumulating in your yard or in any artificial container. Unfortunately, you can't control what your neighbors leave lying around so give us a call if you are being bitten or otherwise noticing mosquitoes around your home.



Your pool is a huge water source for termites and, although they only eat wood, they have been known to chew through pool liners to get to food or water.

Termites and Pool Liners

The last thing you want to think about as you splash around with family and friends in your pool are unwanted pests. If you have an above-ground pool, there is potential for you to have an issue with termites chewing through your pool liner. While termites feed on cellulose, a component of wood, they sometimes will chew through non-wood items to get to a food or water source. Most termites live below ground and have extremely high moisture requirements to survive. They construct tunnels above and below ground to move around in search of food but constantly remain hidden to protect themselves from the drying effects of the sun and open air.

Your pool is a huge water source for termites and as they tunnel around, they may contact your pool and begin to chew and investigate the area for water. Although they only eat wood, they will readily chew through pool liners, and other items, like PVC pipes, to get to wood and water. The holes created in pool liners by termites can eventually lead to the pool draining several inches a day and can become a headache for homeowners to maintain their pool's integrity. If you suspect that your pool is being damaged by termites, give us a call to inspect your pool and implement preventative steps to protect your liner. Don't wait until it is too late, and you have to completely replace your pool liner from termite damage. ■



Backyard Ticks

As spring arrives, most people can't wait to get outside and enjoy the warmer weather. Of course, we humans are not the only ones with this mindset. Throughout much of the country, immature ticks use this opportunity to 'quest' for a host. This means that they will climb up to the top of tall grasses and hold their legs up toward the sky. When a dog, deer, or person brushes by them, the tick will hold on tight and stay on the host until they've consumed a full meal of blood!

Ticks have 4 life stages, egg, larva, nymph and adult. In order to move from one life stage to the next, they have to consume blood from a host. Ticks are categorized by the number of hosts they need to complete their life cycle and most require 3 or 4. Once fully engorged, which can mean a tick weighs 200-600 times what it did before the meal, a tick will drop off of the host, digest its food and molt. Once molted (and now hungry again!), the tick will resume questing behavior.

There are many species of ticks found in North America and there are some serious diseases that they can transmit to humans via bites including Rocky Mountain spotted fever, Heartland virus, relapsing fever, and others. Lyme disease, transmitted by the blacklegged, or deer tick, is certainly the biggest concern and most common tick-borne disease in North America. Although most common on the East Coast and Midwest, there has been a band of Lyme activity identified on the West Coast. There are over 20,000 identified cases of Lyme annually, which can be treated with antibiotics if diagnosed early on. If you suspect Lyme, look out for the following symptoms and seek out a physician: a rash with a bulls-eye appearance that appears around



Symptoms of Lyme Disease:

1. a rash with a bulls-eye appearance that appears around the site of the bite (though this does not always appear)
2. lethargy
3. lesions
4. potentially chronic arthritis, especially in the knee joints.

the site of the bite (though this does not always appear), lethargy, lesions, and potentially chronic arthritis, especially in the knee joints. It's better to err on the side of caution when it comes to Lyme disease because when left untreated for a while it can cause lifelong problems.

Remember to always check yourself thoroughly after spending time outdoors, especially if you were out amongst tall grasses and vegetation. Ticks, especially immature ones, can be hard to see so you may need someone to help inspect. Wear long sleeves and pants when spending time in tick habitat and opt to supplement protection by using insect and tick repellents. If you have pets that venture outdoors, be sure to inspect them too! Tick management is not always straightforward, but you can reduce tick numbers on your property by keeping your lawn short and vegetation trimmed. If you have any questions about ticks or tick management, please give us a call for the latest technical information! ■

Identifying Pest Problems Around Your Home

Learning the key signs of common summer pests around the home can help you prevent pests from making your house their vacation home. Do a “walk about” around your home’s exterior perimeter, paying special note to the foundation but don’t forget to look up around the roof fascia and soffit, where gaps may allow pest entry.

The eaves of a home are a common place where wasps will begin to build nests. Search for nests with an upside-down umbrella appearance, containing many individual “honey-comb” shaped cells. These nests are created by paper wasps that can be dangerous and sting if disturbed.

When inspecting your foundation, be sure to look for termite evidence. Inspect closely for any mud tubes that termites use to tunnel into your home and feed on wood. You may also see swarming termites as another clue to termite presence. Finding small, translucent wings of termite swarms in spider webs, window sills or anywhere else around your home is potentially a sign that termites are in your area. The sooner that termite activity is detected, the greater the chances are of minimizing costly damage to your home.

Improper drainage around the foundation of a structure can result in standing water which can be attractive to many different pests. Mosquitoes are especially troublesome in locations where manmade pools of standing water are present. Some species, like the Asian tiger mosquito, specialize in locating and identifying temporary breeding locations and can deposit eggs in water sources as small as a bottle cap. The adult mosquito will lay its eggs in stagnant water like bird baths, clogged gutters, unused

flower pots and other containers in the backyard. The larvae develop rapidly, and breeding populations of these daytime biting mosquitoes can become established on a property very quickly.

There are some simple steps that you can take on the exterior of the structure that will help to reduce the likelihood of pests invading. Removing and raking old leaves that have collected against the foundation of your home, under the deck, and inside the window wells will eliminate potential hiding and feeding places for many occasional invaders like millipedes, ants, sowbugs and beetles.

Weeds around the foundation of the house can provide access to the building, hide evidence of infestation and trap moisture. Even though it might not be time to mow the entire lawn, the weeds adjacent to the foundation may need to be trimmed to eliminate this pest friendly environment. Vegetation next to the foundation can also make it difficult for termite inspectors to get a close look at the foundation wall, which is a primary access point for termites to enter a structure.

It might go without saying, but any debris that is lying in the yard can become a harborage area for insects like ants, crickets, sowbugs, and even rodents. Rats will often dig burrows beneath piles of debris because it provides shelter from predators. Firewood and brush piles should be relocated as far from the structure as practical. Ants like odorous house ants and acrobat ants will often nest beneath pieces of wood or other discarded items. If you think you see any evidence of these common summer pests, give us a call to thoroughly inspect your home and remedy any underlying pest issues. ■



Search the eaves of your home for wasps nests.



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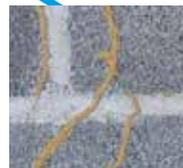
Old leaves that have collected around the foundation can become harborage for pests.



Stagnant water in bird baths, clogged gutters or unused flower pots create perfect breeding sites for mosquitoes.



Weeds around the foundation of the house can provide access to the building, hide evidence of infestation and trap moisture.



Check the foundation for termite evidence, including mud tubes.



INVASION OF THE MILLIPEDES!



Millipedes live outdoors in dark, damp areas underneath leaves, stones, and mulch. They become a problem indoors typically when there has been a significant rain event or drought. They are typically found close to the wall indoors and come inside when your foundation has the right conditions for breeding millipedes.

The good news is that millipedes won't survive very long indoors because of the dry conditions. You can help solve a millipede invasion by ensuring there is no standing water around the foundation, eliminating leaky faucets, and ensuring that drainage is moving water away from the foundation. In the event that millipedes are a problem in your home, don't hesitate to have us come out and identify problem areas and alleviate the issue.



COMING SOON
TO A HOUSE NEAR YOU!

CALL US
IF YOU NOTICE A PROBLEM