



## Bees — Friend or Foe?

In the summer months, backyard barbecues are often visited by uninvited stinging insects. Stinging insects send more than half a million people to emergency rooms each year and reactions to stings can range from painful to life threatening. Most of these stings are caused by wasps and hornets and most people would agree that wasps and hornets are pests — end of story. But what about bees? Although capable of stinging, bees play a beneficial role in the backyard.

Most stings that occur in North America are inflicted by social wasps or hornets. They live communally in nests constructed underground, inside voids, under eaves or in shrubs or trees. When threatened or disturbed, these pests will respond

aggressively to defend the nest with repeated stings to the offending party. On the other hand, some wasps, like the ominous sounding (and looking) cicada killer, are not social and are not aggressive and rarely sting even when disturbed.

Social bees, with the exception of Africanized honey bees, are rarely aggressive and almost always considered beneficial. Bumble bees and honey bees are often seen buzzing from one flower to the next in backyard gardens. Each plays an important role transferring pollen from one flower to the next. Without this important service, most of the fruit and vegetables that we rely on for food would be non-existent. On a commercial scale, honey bees also provide products like honey and beeswax.



## Protecting Yourself from Mosquito Bites

Mosquitoes are more than just a nuisance. These annoying bugs can carry serious disease which can be transmitted to you and your family right in your own backyard. West Nile, Chikungunya, Dengue and now Zika have dominated the headlines these last few summers, with no end in sight. There are a few things that you can do to protect yourself from the mosquitoes that carry the pathogens that cause these diseases and they are surprisingly simple: eliminate potential breeding locations from your property, wear long sleeves and pants outdoors and apply mosquito repellent to exposed skin.

### Look for Breeding Areas

Mosquitoes breed in standing water. Different species prefer different kinds of water sources in which to lay eggs, which grow and develop into larvae, pupae, and eventually flying, biting mosquitoes. Search your property for any source of standing water and remove it, or dump it out. Some species can breed in as little as an ounce of water. If the water is present for more than five days in a row, it is a potential mosquito breeding ground and should be eliminated.

*continued on page 2*

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# April Showers Bring May ... Pests?

**W**eather can have a dramatic influence on the number and kinds of pests that enter a structure. Extreme heat and dry weather in the summer can result in ants seeking sources of water and cooler environments indoors. In the winter, pests like box elder bugs and cluster flies seek warm structures to overwinter. Rainy springtime weather is no different. Warmer temperatures and wet weather can cause pests to move from their outdoor overwintering locations into structures.

During the winter months many outdoor insect invaders, including ants, spend much of the winter in sheltered locations under rocks, logs, under mulch and in soil. Spending the winter underneath insulated items or below the frost line in soil allows individuals as well as entire colonies to survive cold temperatures. When the weather warms and spring showers begin, resulting in saturated soil, many of these pests are forced out of their hiding places in search of drier places to nest. Ants are especially likely to enter homes following a heavy rain event.

In addition to seeking higher ground, ants may be forced indoors to forage for food when the sweet secretions of honeydew producing insects like aphids and scale insects is washed away during heavy rain. Honey dew is an important food for many ant species. Without their primary food source present outdoors, ants may come indoors in search of food. ■



## Mosquitoes continued from page 1

### Cover Up

Traditionally, when we think of mosquitoes, we think of flying pests that buzz in our ears and bite under the cover of darkness. For most species, that's true, but some mosquito species, like the Asian tiger mosquito and the yellow fever mosquito bite aggressively during the day. Whenever venturing outside in places where mosquitoes are active, it's important to cover all exposed skin. Wearing long sleeves and long pants make it very difficult for mosquitoes to bite. Sometimes completely covering up isn't practical, especially during the heat of the summer. In those cases, mosquito repellent is the answer.

### Apply Repellent

Mosquito repellents containing the active ingredients DEET, picardin, oil of lemon eucalyptus or IR3535 are most effective at repelling biting mosquitoes. In independent university studies, these ingredients perform best when tested against hungry mosquitoes and are recommended for protection from mosquitoes by the U.S. Centers for Disease Control. It is important to read and follow all label instructions on any insect repellent. Use the correct dosages and

Following these simple steps to protect yourself and your family from mosquitoes will allow you to get outside and enjoy the spring season, enjoy it! ■

### 3 STEPS TO HELP PROTECT YOU AND YOUR FAMILY FROM MOSQUITO-BORNE ILLNESSES:

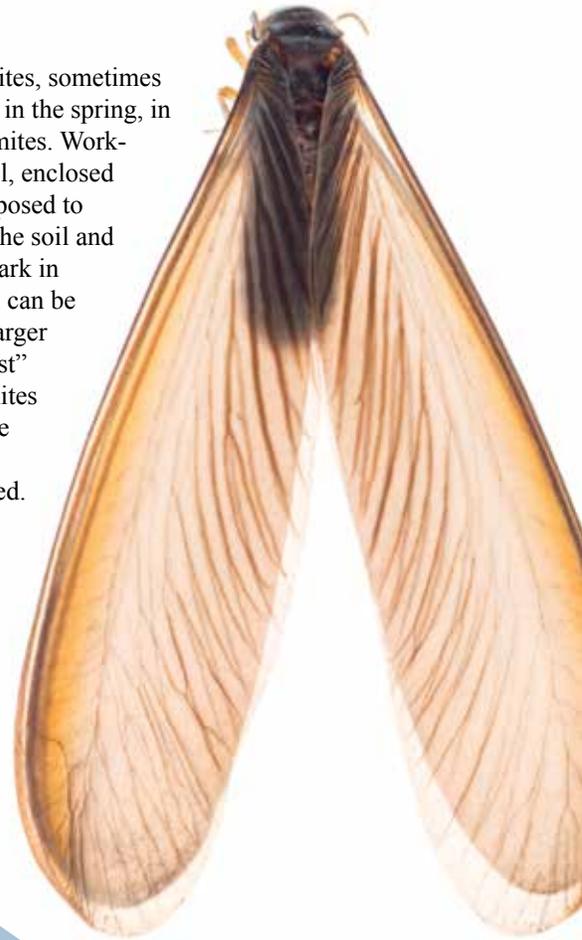
1. Eliminate potential breeding locations from your property
2. Wear long sleeves and pants outdoors
3. Apply mosquito repellent to exposed skin.



# Swarm Season is Here

One of the most visible signs of a termite infestation is the presence of flying termites, sometimes called swarmers. These dark – bodied, winged termites emerge in large numbers in the spring, in search of mates to begin a new colony. Most termites in a colony are worker termites. Workers are soft bodied, creamy-white in color and spend nearly all of their time inside the soil, enclosed inside mud shelter tubes, or feeding inside wood. Worker termites easily dry out when exposed to sunlight and the drying effects of air. Swarmers, on the other hand are designed to leave the soil and strike out in search of mates in the hope of starting a new colony. Swarmer termites are dark in color with four wings of equal size and shape. This is one of the ways that flying termites can be distinguished from flying ants. Ants have four wings too, but the front wing of an ant is larger than the rear wing. In addition to wing size and shape, ants have a constricted, or narrow “waist” separating the thorax (where the legs are attached) from the abdomen. Alternatively, termites have a broad “waist.” One final way to distinguish a termite swarmer from a flying ant are the antennae. Ants have “elbowed” or bent antennae, but termites have straight antennae.

When termite colonies swarm, hundreds or thousands of winged termites are released. When this occurs indoors, the insects are often attracted to light sources, so homeowners may find piles of swarmers on windowsills or around other light sources. Soon after emergence, termite swarmers will break off their wings, so it isn't uncommon to see piles of wings on windowsills or countertops. Even though termite nearly all termite swarmers will perish if they emerge inside a structure, it's important to contact your pest professional immediately. Termites swarming inside indicate an underlying termite infestation that may not be visible. A trained inspector can provide insight into the hidden infestation and provide a plan for eliminating termites from your home. ■



## DID YOU KNOW ...

More than 600,000 U.S. homes suffer from termite damage totaling more than \$5 billion annually?

More than 2 million homes require termite treatment each year. Homeowners insurance can help recover losses from fires, floods and earthquakes, but it is almost impossible to get insurance against termites. Termites are found in almost every state as well as Mexico and parts of Canada. They eat wood and may also destroy paper products, cardboard boxes, furniture, and various other items. Even buildings with steel framing and masonry walls are targets because of the wooden doors, window frames, support beams, cabinets and shelving. Finding out your home has termites can be scary. You typically can't see them, you can't hear them and frequently only a trained inspector can find signs of an infestation. Do-it-yourself treatments for the control of termites are virtually impossible. Specialized equipment is used and only experts have the necessary knowledge for effective control. A trained termite control specialist can provide protection from termite infestation. To learn more about how we can develop a termite management plan best suited to your situation, call us, your trained pest professionals, today.



*winged swarmers*



*worker termite*



# Spring Cleaning for Your Yard

A Few Simple Steps Can Help Keep Pests Away this Spring

**W**hen we think of spring, we don't always extend our efforts to the backyard. However, 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 this spring.

## Rake Up Leaves

Removing the 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. Leaves trap moisture and provide food for pests that feed on them as they decay.

## Remove Standing Water

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 man-made 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.

## Trim Weeds

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 primary access point for termites to enter a structure.

## Clean Up Debris

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. Even termites can be attracted to wood scraps and firewood that is stored adjacent to a structure. ■