

Pest Gazette



Not a Creature Was Stirring ...Not Even a Mouse?

As temperatures drop around the home, mice begin to stir as they seek out a warm area to shelter indoors. The house mouse (*Mus musculus*) is one of the most economically important rodent species in the United States. They are an incredibly adaptable creature and can survive in many different conditions if they have access to food, warmth, and shelter.

House mice consume and contaminate food meant for humans, pets, livestock, and other animals. They can transmit pathogens that cause disease, such as salmonellosis, through their feces. Their fur, urine and droppings can cause various illnesses, including allergies and asthma. Additionally, mice can be infested with ticks or fleas and can bring these parasites indoors where they can affect humans or pets. Mice can also cause considerable damage to structures and property through their gnawing actions. In fact, 25% of unexplained house fires in the United States are attributed to rodents gnawing on wires. >

COMMON MYTHS ABOUT PESTS IN WINTER: FACT OR FICTION?

Pests do not survive the winter.

FICTION

Pest management services are not needed in the winter.

FICTION

You can help prevent pests from entering the house in the winter.

FACT

Indoor heating is essential to many of us, especially for people who live in areas that receive heaps of snow and the occasional ice storm. Unfortunately, those lovely conditions we create indoors are also extremely inviting to outdoor pests looking to escape the winter wonderland as well. Insects are cunning creatures that have adapted multiple ways to survive cold winter months.

Most insect populations will dwindle and be very low during winter months. To survive, insects will overwinter in various stages, many as eggs, until temperatures begin to rise again -signaling that it's time to wake up and emerge from their eggshell. Some insects will also undergo something called diapause, essentially hibernation, initiated when daylight hours get shorter and temperatures begin to drop. An insect in diapause uses only a fraction of their normal energy and survives on stored body fat during the entirety of winter. Another amazing feat of insects is their ability to survive freezing temperatures by producing glycerol in their bodies. The production of glycerol in insects is akin to antifreeze in a car, thus allowing insects the ability to supercool and survive extreme winter conditions.

One way insects overwinter is by hiding in tree holes, under bark and leaves, or even below the soil surface to avoid cool temperatures until the weather becomes more favorable. When these sites are not available, many insects turn to the inside of our homes for protection, where there are multiple cracks and holes for an insect to survive the cooler months. >

Not a Creature Was Stirring ...Not Even a Mouse?

House mice can squeeze into a hole as small as the diameter of a dime. The house mouse has been estimated to infest homes 10 to 20 times more than rodents, probably due to their small size and behavior. Telltale signs of rodent infestation include nests, droppings, fresh gnaw marks, or tracks. Call us to help you to identify weak points where mice may be gaining access to your home or to help you rid any ongoing rodent problems.

Even if you begin preparing your home early in the fall to prevent sneaky pests, insects are incredibly small and resourceful in their ability to enter homes. Call us when the inevitable pest does enter your home to identify the intruder and help prevent any further pests from spending the winter in your home.

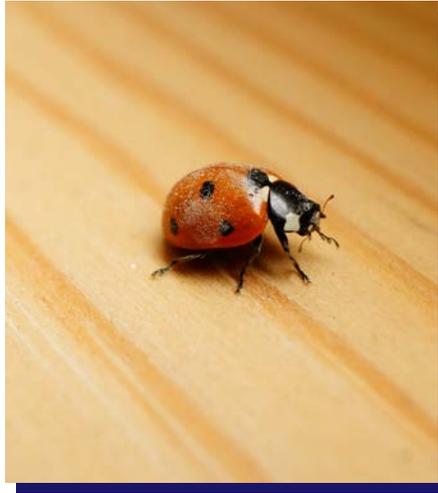


Cluster flies are, by far, the most common fly found in homes during the colder winter months. They can sometimes be serious nuisance problems, particularly in taller buildings where they tend to concentrate on upper stories on the southwest sunny sides. Cluster flies are large and dark gray and will spend winter in attics and voids. On warm sunny winter days, they will come out and fly toward lights, where you often will find them in windowsills. Cluster flies are a type of blow fly but have very different habits. They develop as parasites of earthworms and are not associated with garbage, animal wastes, or unsanitary conditions. Instead, this fly requires a shelter during winter to keep warm, and your home provides the perfect place. Flies that are present in late summer/early fall seek winter shelter and

they survive winters as a semi-dormant adult fly. Cluster flies do not feed nor reproduce within buildings, but, on those warmer sunny days you will see them in great numbers and this can cause alarm and be quite a nuisance for most homeowners. Call us to help you with your cluster fly issues and to help identify areas where they may be coming inside of your home.



Merchant grain beetles can be found in grain products, but also like to attack cereals, cake mixes, macaroni, cookies, and chocolate. These beetles infest stored food products and can contaminate food. They are dark brown, one-eighth of an inch long and have six saw-like teeth on each side of their flat bodies. The beetle can crawl into packaging where it will eat and produce young. These beetles can fly and are attracted to lights, so they may be found around windows and other light sources. Typically, the beetles are found in pantries or in food processing areas or warehouses. Call us to help identify infested stored products and thoroughly inspect for merchant grain beetles and other pests that infest pantries. >



Lady beetles, often called lady bugs, are common throughout the United States, especially the multicolored Asian lady beetle. Most people are familiar with their yellow, orange, and red colors with tell-tale black spots. Even though you may be familiar with lady beetles, it can still be alarming when lady beetles move en masse to the outside of a building,

entering through attic vents and holes typically near the eaves and windows of a home. Vacuums with hepa-filters can be used to suck up lady beetles or simply brushing them off the wall using a broom is an alternative for removal. However, lady beetles can cause smells and wall discoloration if smashed. Therefore, if removal is not working or a viable option, call us to manage any infestations and help you proactively prevent lady beetles in the future. >



Stink bugs. If you have ever attempted to swat, or even worse - smash, a stink bug, then you quickly learned how stink bugs earned their namesake. Stink bugs emit these odors to deter predators from eating them. Unfortunately, they don't distinguish between you or a bird when releasing their putrid odors out of small holes located on their

abdomens. Stink bugs will overwinter within your home, but typically stay hidden in wall voids or attics until spring time, when you will see them emerge from your home. The best action for stink bug control is prevention, so call us today to discuss a proactive program to help prevent stink bugs from entering your home this winter.