

PestGazette

SPRING 2019

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Moisture Issues

Insects and other pests need the same things we do: food, shelter, and water. Unfortunately, we often provide them with one or all of those things! Eliminating or reducing moisture in and around your home will go a long way in decreasing insect populations. In addition to being a necessary component of life, water also makes wood more attractive to termites and carpenter ants, encourages fungal growth, and serves as a breeding material for mosquitoes and some other types of flies.

Even if you don't suspect that you might have moisture problems, it's probably worth investigating. Check out some of the common possible causes of accumulated moisture around your home. Mulch and vegetation abutting

your house attract pests like earwigs, termites, springtails, and centipedes by holding moisture against your foundation. If reasonable, inspect your gutters and downspouts to see if they are properly installed, clear of debris, and that water is draining away from the structure. If you use a sprinkler system, check to see if sprinkler heads are aimed away from the structure so you aren't unnecessarily soaking your house and drawing in pests! Two other possibilities include beneath air conditioning units and leaking hoses.

If you aren't confident in diagnosing or fixing moisture issues, give us a call and we will assess the situation and make sure your property isn't unwittingly attracting and keeping pests around.

Filthy Flies

There are numerous pesky, filthy flies that can become a nuisance in and around the home as spring temperatures begin to rise. House flies will begin to zoom around indoors, landing and feeding on our food. Large-bodied, metallic blow flies may become numerous outdoors around trash cans and other scum build up. Drain flies often appear indoors suddenly and mysteriously, congregating around windows, lamp shades at night, and especially showers, bathtubs, sinks, and floor drains.

Adult drain flies are tiny, fuzzy, dark greyish insects with their body and wings covered in dense hairs. Because they are so hairy, they often are mistaken for tiny moths. They reproduce in

extremely moist, organic solids such as the muck and slime around drains and septic tanks.

You also can not forget about fruit flies, a common indoor pest, that will feed and breed in the *continued on page 2*



House fly



Blow fly



Insect Emergence in the Spring

Spring is in the air, you feel lighter on your feet, and the familiar busy buzz, buzz of insects abounds! It's a lovely time of year but have you often thought about what exactly triggers insects to begin their spring bustling activities?

Much like us humans, increased temperatures and longer daylight hours are triggers for insects to awaken from their winter slumber. Insects survive the winter in numerous body forms, often as eggs or immature larvae. A few insects survive in their adult form and undergo a process called diapause, which is essentially hibernation for insects, where their metabolism slows drastically to preserve energy.

Once the right temperature and day light hours are sustained for a period of time, an insect's internal clock will cause them to awaken. The few that survived winter and emerged as adults may

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quickly find mates to begin the next generation. Insects that emerge in their immature stage will find fresh, new vegetation among other food sources and begin their feeding frenzy to continue development.

Along with all of the insects that are emerging outdoors, any insects that found shelter indoors during the cold temperatures will also begin waking up inside of homes. If you are alarmed about insects that are inside of your home or worried about insects outside getting in, don't hesitate to contact us to help you with your spring "insect" cleaning! ■

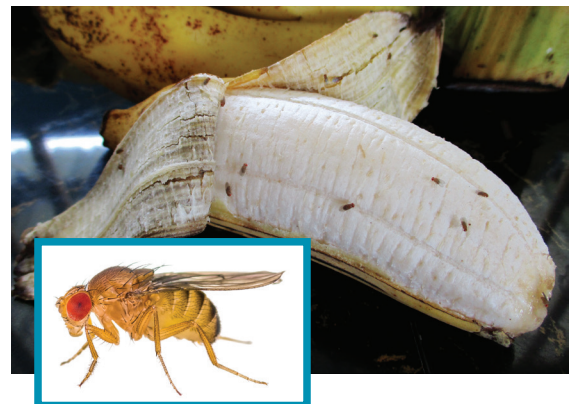


Drain flies are fuzzy and are often mistaken for moths.

Filthy Flies *(continued from page 1)*

semi-liquid of rotting fruits and vegetables that are often accidentally forgotten.

It's not unusual to have a fly problem when spills and overlooked scum provide an excellent breeding ground for flies. Unfortunately, many of these flies can be an extreme nuisance because they will get into eyes, ears, and noses of people and pets in the area. Since these flies originate in filthy conditions, there is also the possibility of health issues and disease transmission. Reach out to us to have a licensed pest professional visit your home to inspect areas that can breed flies and then eliminate breeding sites, providing effective methods to clean pipes and trap flies indoors and out. ■



Fruit flies are tiny but pesky and can be found around rotting fruits and veggies.

Keeping Ticks at Bay

As spring arrives, people and animals begin to venture outside to enjoy the warmer weather. Throughout much of the country, immature ticks also begin to take advantage of host activity and use the opportunity to ‘quest’ for a host. They will climb up to the top of tall grasses and extend their legs up and out in search of a suitable host. When a dog, deer, or person brushes by them, the tick will grasp on and dig their mouthparts under the skin for a blood meal.

Once fully engorged, in which a tick can feed up to 200-600 times its body weight, most ticks will drop off of the host, digest its food and molt into the next life stage. Once molted, the tick will resume questing behavior in search of its next blood meal to further complete development, usually taking 3-4 different hosts until it reaches adulthood.

Ticks transmit many serious diseases, like Rocky Mountain spotted fever and Lyme disease. Remember to always check yourself thoroughly after spending time outdoors and use repellents, especially if you were out amongst tall grasses and

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TO REDUCE TICK NUMBERS AROUND YOUR HOME:

- ✓ keep your lawn short
- ✓ trim vegetation
- ✓ reduce wildlife



vegetation. Ticks, especially immature ones, can be hard to see so you may need someone to help inspect hard to reach areas. If you have pets that venture outdoors, be sure to inspect them too and keep them on tick control medications supervised by your veterinarian. If you have been feeling ill or uncharacteristically weak and tired after a tick bite, seek medical advice as you may have contracted a tick-borne illness.

You can reduce tick numbers on your property by keeping your lawn short, vegetation trimmed, and wildlife around the home reduced. If you have any questions about ticks or tick management, please don't hesitate to call us for a detailed inspection and management strategy. ■



Stinging Insect Pests

European hornet



Cicada killer



Paper wasp



Yellowjacket

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 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. A common stinging pest encountered around homes are paper wasps, of which the nests are common and easy to identify. They are usually constructed on the underside of eaves, external air conditioners, structural corners and window sills. Paper wasp nests are made from chewed wood pulp, plant matter and saliva and appear paper-like. The nest is connected to the structure by a small stalk and hangs down, umbrella-like

with many cells visible. On the other hand, some wasps, like the ominous sounding (and looking) cicada killer, are not social nor aggressive and rarely sting even when disturbed.

Although capable of stinging, bees play a beneficial role in the backyard. Social bees, except for 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 nonexistent. On a commercial scale, honey bees also provide products like honey and beeswax.

If you believe you have stinging insects around your home that could be dangerous, give us a call so we can determine what kind of stinging insect you have and either assist in helping preserve beneficial bees or removing wasp nests that could cause harm. ■