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The Pest Bulletin

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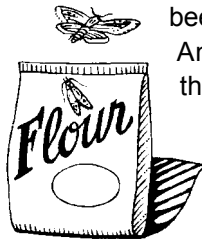
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Discovering Pantry Pests

or "Yuck! there are bugs in this food!"

Every one of us has made the unpleasant discovery at some time of moths, beetles or weevils in our stored food. These pests spoil an incredible amount of food. Even if your favorite supermarket has great pest control, all their sources won't be pest-free. Considering all the different foods we bring into our kitchens, some of the human or pet food we buy will be infested from time to time.

And pantry pests aren't just carried in on food. Some of them fly or crawl in from outdoors. Nearby abandoned



nests of rodents, birds, wasps and bees are common breeding places. Another source is hoards of food that rats, mice and squirrels have hidden away for lean times. Rodent food caches of several pounds are not uncommon.

Your primary goal when you discover an infestation of pantry pests is to locate and throw out all the packages where they are breeding. Look first for boxes or bags of food that have been sitting around for a long time. If the packages have been opened or damaged, they are even more likely to be infested. It may be

necessary to empty all cabinets and shelves. Search not only obvious sources like cake and muffin mixes, cereal, pasta, and beans, but also foods like candy, nuts, dried fruit, bird seed, pet treats, and spices—some pests even eat hot peppers!

You must be very thorough when looking for the source or sources of your pantry pests.

Pest Prevention Tip of the Month

Overwhelmed by papers and paperwork? Now might be a good time to go through your magazines, newspapers, catalogs, files, etc., and throw out, donate, or recycle any you don't need. Piles of papers provide food and hiding places for silverfish and other pests.

McKinzie Now Accepting Credit Card or Checking/Savings Payments

McKinzie Pest Control has now subscribed to an on-line payment service through *Modern Payment Solutions, LLC*. This convenient and secure payment service gives you the opportunity to pay your bill directly to us from your checking or savings account or with your VISA or MasterCard. No more buying envelopes or stamps to send in your payments to us!

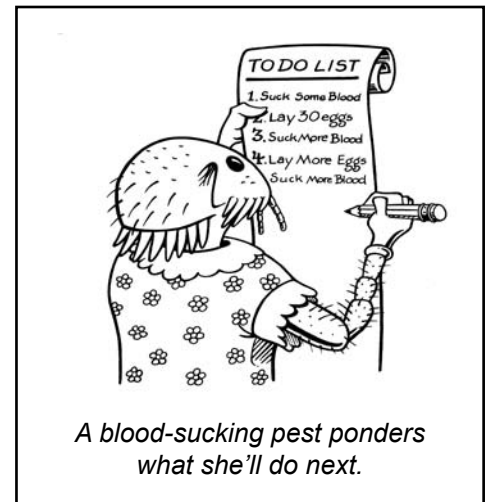
If you are interested in signing up for this service, contact our office and we will set up your account and process your first payment. Then you can make future payments by calling our office or going directly to our website at www.pest-free.net where you can enter your account and payment information

online. You will receive a confirmation e-mail for each transaction.

Steve McKinzie, president of McKinzie Pest Control, said "Several of our customers had been asking us for this service, so it was important for us to make every effort to accommodate their needs. We are excited about this new convenience for our customers. After all, **Pest Free...The Best It Can Be!!!** needs to be more than just another fancy slogan."



www.pest-free.net





Groundhog Day Coming

If a groundhog comes out of its hole on February 2nd and sees its shadow, he'll go back into his hole and winter will continue for another 6 weeks, right? Well, not exactly.

This old tradition has its roots in European history. Apparently Germans coming to this country held this belief, but the weather forecaster was a badger. When they came to the new world, the badger was replaced by the more plentiful woodchuck (groundhog).

Although true believers contend Punxsutawney Phil (the real groundhog portrayed in the 1993 movie *Groundhog Day*, starring Bill Murray) is never wrong, he has only been correct 39% of the time, so he will probably not be hired as a weatherman anytime soon! (Or perhaps he will!)

What really dictates whether a groundhog will go back into its hole or stay alert is its degree of hunger or sexual desire. If either of these are highly elevated, he will stay out of his hole and become active. Otherwise, it's back to sleep! Shadows have nothing to do with it.

Birds Sing Differently in Cities

When songbirds move to cities, they change their tune, new research shows.

At least that is true for the great tit, a small bird with a yellow breast and belly. Research on the great tit in 10 European cities, including London and Paris, showed that in every case, their songs were different than the songs of the great tit in nearby forests. The city birds sang faster, shorter songs at a higher pitch. The researchers believe the city birds are trying to drown out the background noise created by cars and other city noises that would disrupt the exchange of vital information, such as males singing to attract mates.



Illegal Snail Alert

Giant African land snails about the size of a human fist and up to 8 inches long are originally from Africa, but they are spreading though the Caribbean and to much of the tropics, and the fear is that they might become established in this country. These snails are illegal to possess, but have turned up in some pet stores, and even schools where they have been used for science lessons by teachers who were not aware of their status. Three snails smuggled in by a boy were released in a backyard in Miami, and in seven years there were more than 18,000 of them. It took



10 years and a million dollars to eradicate them.

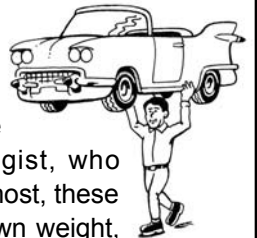
Any snail whose shell is larger than two inches long is probably a giant African land snail. Never release them or throw away their bedding material, which may contain eggs. These are highly invasive snails that can eat 500 different plants, and although they are tropical, they have survived snow. If you have these, call the USDA to have them properly collected and removed.

Pest Control's Hurricane Role

It has now become evident that the professional use of pesticides played a key role in protecting the public's health after Hurricane Katrina. Public health officials, pest control companies, and others worked together in the days and months following the hurricane, preventing what could easily have become a major public health disaster. Mosquitoes, flies, and rodents were breeding like crazy in the wet areas and piles of debris following the hurricane, and massive control efforts aimed at these pests halted a potentially serious outbreak of pest-borne diseases.

Did You Know?

☑ The *Guinness Book of World Records* several years ago stated that the **world's strongest animal** is the rhinoceros beetle, able to support **850 times** its own body weight. This caught the attention of an inquiring university physiologist, who decided to test the claim. He found that, at the most, these beetles could carry only up to 100 times their own weight, but at that weight they could barely move. At 40 times their own weight, the beetles plodded about for about 10 minutes before tiring, and at 30 times their weight the beetles showed no sign of fatigue, even after half an hour.



☑ Some sources recommend controlling **bed bugs** with solar heat by wrapping the mattress in black plastic and placing it in the sun. But research reported in the December 2006 issue of the *Journal of Economic Entomology* shows that, while temperatures on the upper (sun-exposed) side of a wrapped mattress (during nine hours of full sun exposure) can reach 185° F, which kills bed bugs, the bottom side reaches only 95° F, so bed bugs simply move to the cooler side during the process, making the technique ineffective. A professional, thorough treatment of the mattresses and surrounding areas is needed to control bedbugs.