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## The Pest Bulletin

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# Summer Stinging Pests

Stinging pests are out in force during summer, and if we get on the wrong side of them, they will make us regret it—**"OUCH!"**

These pests have developed stings to defend themselves or their colony, and those stings are meant to hurt and make us want to 'head for the hills'—fast! Even worse, some people have a severe allergic reaction to stings, making even a single sting life-threatening if not treated immediately.

It was once thought that only about one in 250 people is highly allergic to



stinging pests. But more recent studies, using skin tests with bee and wasp venom, indicate that up to 4% of the population have allergic reactions. In fact, over 50 Americans die every year from severe allergic reactions to insect stings. More die from yellowjackets than any other pest. Many of those who die had never experienced an allergic sting reaction before.

People who aren't allergic to insect venom can still die if stung enough times,

which can happen when a nest is disturbed. Left untreated, kidney failure can occur within hours or days after receiving more than 150 bee stings or 20 wasp stings. However, many victims stung over 1,000 times have survived following proper medical treatment.

Stinging pests include bees, wasps, yellowjackets, hornets, and various ants, spiders, scorpions, centipedes, and others. If you are experiencing problems with any of these pests, give us a call.

## Pest Prevention Tip of the Month

When you plant a tree, place it so that the branches, at maturity, will not push against the side of the house or its roof. Trees are often planted too close to a home, and their roots eventually crack the foundation. Also, branches rubbing against a structure can damage it, as well as act as a bridge for ants and other pests.

## Protect Your Food From Pests



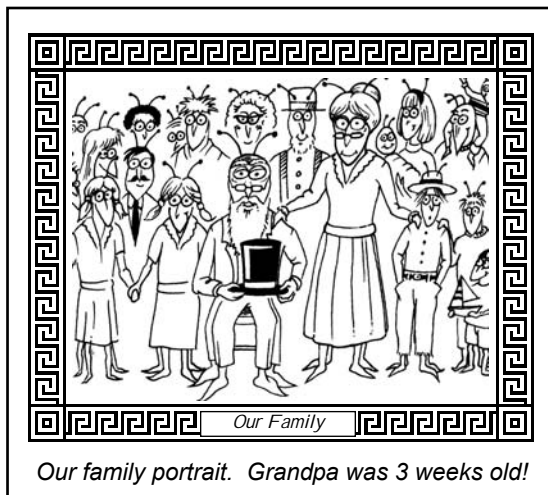
**"What's yours is ours"** is the way many pests seem to operate, and that's especially true about our food. From the time it is being grown, to while it is stored, processed, transported, placed on retail shelves, and finally in our kitchens, it must constantly be protected against attack by a variety of pests.

In our homes, our food is under attack by pests like cockroaches, ants, flies, rats, mice, plus a variety of stored food pests like flour moths, beetles, weevils, and mites. And, it's not just our food that is being attacked, it's often our pet food as well, and even items like bird seed. Some of the damage is due to the pests eating the food, some is caused by what the pests leave behind (droppings, skins that have been shed, or dead bodies of the pests themselves), and some damage is done by the pests

spreading germs to the food.

For all these reasons, protect your food! Never buy damaged or old packages of food, because they are more likely to have become infested with pests, which often spread when you bring the package into your home. Likewise, rotate and use up old packages of food that have been in your pantry a long time, as these are more likely to be infested. Store opened packages of food in air-tight plastic or glass containers, or in the refrigerator. Protect bags and boxes of pet food and pet treats as well. Empty waste cans regularly, and clean up food spills.

Of course, our regular pest treatments, to help keep pests from coming indoors, are an important ally in your battle to keep your home, and food, pest-free.



Our family portrait. Grandpa was 3 weeks old!

Thank you for your business and referrals!



## First Aid for Bee Stings

When you are stung by a honeybee, the stinger pulls off of the bee and usually is left sticking into your skin. As quickly as possible, hopefully within seconds, get it out! Stingers have muscles attached at their base, and these muscles continue to drive the shaft deeper and pump in more venom from a sac below the skin, even after the stinger is detached from the bee. *Note:* it's only honeybees, not wasps, yellowjackets, or bumblebees that leave their stinger behind, so if you know what stung you, you will know whether to look for the stinger.

Many people ask us the best way to remove a stinger. It doesn't matter how—just do it quickly! Either grasp it and pull it out, or using a fingernail or knife, scrape against the stinger where it enters the skin to draw it out. In recent tests, the *speed of removing the stinger* determined the size of the welt from a bee sting, not the technique used. (It's an old wives tale that pulling the stinger out will squeeze the venom sac and push in more venom. It's a valve-like system, not influenced by squeezing, that pumps out venom.)

Wash the sting area with soap and water, and apply an ice pack to reduce swelling. A moist paste of baking soda or meat tenderizer may provide some comfort.

Anyone with more than a local reaction where they were stung should seek medical attention immediately. A few people are hypersensitive to bee stings. They should carry an insect sting kit, and/or contact a physician regarding desensitization to bee stings (called venom immunotherapy).

## Your Questions Answered

**Q.** I have many small flies indoors. Where are they coming from?

**A.** Flies may enter from outdoors, or they can be breeding inside. Here are four common small flies that breed indoors, and a few of their favored breeding places.

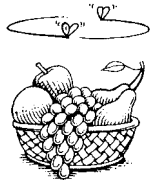
① **Fruit flies** breed in rotting fruit and vegetables, as well as the gunk in the bottom of garbage cans and similar areas.

② **Drain** or **moth flies** breed in the wet muck or slime on the insides of floor and sink drains, and in similar places.

③ **Phorid flies** breed in garbage, sewer line leaks, slimy drains, and damp mops.

④ **Fungus gnats** breed in overwatered house plant soil, and around water leaks.

If you continue to have small flies, point them out to us on our next treatment.



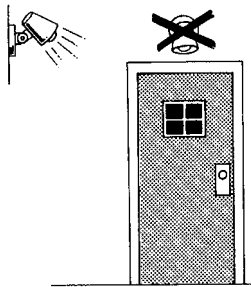
## The Wild Parrots of Brooklyn



In the late 1960's a crate of parrots, actually monk parakeets, broke open at JFK Airport in New York. Despite early eradication efforts, these parrots have survived, and thrived, and now are well established in Brooklyn, the Hudson River cliffs in New Jersey, and some other areas.

These big birds are about a foot long, with green backs and gray chests. They build group nests that unfortunately can become problems—their nest "condominiums" have multiple rooms and can weigh an amazing 400 pounds, and they often build them at the tops of light and transmission poles.

## Are Your Lights Attracting Pests?



It's not just moths that are attracted to lights, it's mosquitoes, flies, midges, beetles—most any insect that flies at night. And it doesn't stop there—these insects attract other insects looking for something to eat. Spiders, ants, cockroaches, earwigs, and many other pests move toward lights to feed on the other insects there. Some of these pests invariably find their way indoors and begin to cause problems. Here are a few things you can do to decrease the number of pests attracted to your outdoor lights.

- ✓ Use yellow bulbs rather than white. Don't use mercury vapor lights in commercial settings because this wave length is extremely attractive to flying insects.
- ✓ Use lower wattage bulbs whenever possible—the brighter the light, the more pests it will attract.
- ✓ Place the lights away from doorways, windows, and the side of a home whenever possible, and instead shine them *towards* the building. Directing them outward attracts more pests from further away. Never place lights directly over a door, as every time the door is opened at night, insects will come indoors.
- ✓ Using shrubs or other objects, block the light beaming out and away from the building so that it doesn't attract more pests from afar.
- ✓ Close curtains at night if your indoor lights can be seen from a distance.