

PestGazette

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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. They are soft bodied, creamy-white in color and spend nearly all of their time in the soil. Worker termites easily dry out when exposed to sunlight or 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. They are dark in color with four wings of equal size and shape.

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's not uncommon to see piles of wings on windowsills or countertops.

Nearly all termite swarmers will perish if they emerge inside a structure, but it's still important to contact your pest professional immediately. Termites swarming inside indicate an underlying infestation that may not be visible. A trained inspector can locate and eliminate termites from your home.

There's a Snake in My Boot!

Woody's punch line in the movie Toy Story is thought-provoking if given much thought. When you dig further into the saying, it raises important questions for identifying pest problems around the house. For instance, will snakes get into boots?

While boots are not necessarily attractive to snakes for any reason, they can provide shelter to a snake that has taken residence in or around your home. However, actually having a snake move into your boot would be a rare and highly unlikely occurrence. There are almost certainly plenty of other places available that snakes would prefer to hide. As a general rule, boots or other shoes that aren't in a damp area, like a basement, and are worn regularly probably won't harbor snakes or any other *continued on page 2*



pest. If you do have boots that have been stored in a damp, dark area for an extended period of time, it's good practice to check the inside with a flash light for any pest evidence and shake them thoroughly before putting them on.

There are two main reasons why snakes move into homes — food and shelter. Limiting access

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How to Become a “Skeeter Beater”

Limiting Mosquito Breeding Sites in Your Yard

Mosquitoes are one of the most important public health pests because many species transmit disease to humans. Mosquitoes will start emerging and breeding in standing water as rain events become more frequent and temperatures rise. Many of the mosquito species that transmit disease require very little standing water to lay their eggs, with little as 1/2 inch of water required for breeding.

Source reduction, which essentially means eliminating breeding sites, is very important for helping control mosquitoes. Any container that could potentially hold water around the yard should be checked for mosquito larvae. Dumping containers in your backyard that can hold water, such as kiddie pools, bird baths, flower pots, and numerous other household items, can greatly reduce container-breeding mosquitoes. Female mosquitoes secrete a glue-like substance when laying the eggs to stick them to the surface of a container, so you should also scrub the container to remove any eggs that have not hatched.

It also important to protect yourself when you are outdoors and exposed to mosquitoes. Wear long sleeves and pants when outdoors when possible. Also wear mosquito repellent that contains DEET, picaridin, or oil of lemon eucalyptus, which are all suggested by the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) as active ingredients that provide sufficient protection. Please contact us for help identifying breeding sites and further control measures to keep your family safe from mosquitoes. ■



Protect Yourself from Bites!

Wear long sleeves and pants outdoors when possible and use mosquito repellent that contains DEET, picaridin, or oil of lemon eucalyptus. These active ingredients are all suggested by the CDC to provide sufficient protection.



Snakes (continued from page 1)

to both of these things will help prevent snake problems. Snakes prefer cool, damp areas so seal any access points and openings in areas like crawl spaces and basements where snakes would prefer to harbor. Keeping the yard clean by removing piles of debris, trash, and fallen branches will also help eliminate areas that snakes may be hiding. Furthermore, regularly cutting the grass in combination with weed control will reduce hiding places for snakes, as well as reduce other pests that snakes would eat.

There are some snake species in the United States that are venomous and can be dangerous. To eliminate any risk, you shouldn't handle snakes that you find in your home or your yard. If you do think you have been bitten by a venomous snake, contact your health professional or your local poison control center. If you need further help with identifying snake problems around your home and for eliminating other pests that could provide a meal for snakes, give us a call. ■



Pesky Ant Invasions

Bees have begun buzzing around, flowers are springing from the ground ... and ants have decided to start picnicking in your kitchen – spring has arrived! Ants currently hold the prized #1 position as the top nuisance pest in the United States. Thus, it is very likely that you may encounter ants in your home at some point this spring and into the summer. While there are over 50 species of ants that may infest homes, there are a few in particular that are common invaders. A few of the typical home invading ants you could run into are the odorous house ant, carpenter ant, and red imported fire ant among several other species. Contact us today to provide a detailed assessment and to protect your property.

Odorous House Ant

The odorous house ant is one of the most commonly encountered ant species in homes. They typically nest indoors and are attracted to sweets. They are a medium-sized ant species, about 1/10" long and brown-dark brown in color. They have a distinct musty odor when crushed, hence the name odorous house ant. These ants have large colonies and even have multiple queens in a colony. This can cause problems if the colony gets disturbed because a queen can take off with some workers and spread the colony throughout your home.

Carpenter Ant

Carpenter ants are a large species, ranging from a quarter to half-an-inch in length. A common misconception is that they eat wood; however, they do not feed on wood, but rather protein and sugary sources. They can be problematic indoors, especially in wood that has a high moisture content, because they will excavate inside wood to form their galleries and tunnels for nesting. Give us a call to assess any damaged wood and to evaluate any suspicious ant activity.

Red Imported Fire Ant

The red imported fire ant is a common ant species encountered in the Southeastern US. Most people are familiar with this ant species because its sting packs a powerful punch that is not easily forgotten. Red imported fire ants typically reside outdoors and build visible mounds above ground in open areas with a lot of sunlight. These ants are small, with the worker ants varying in size from 1/16-3/16" and are reddish-brown in color. ■



Odorous House Ant



Carpenter Ant



Red Imported Fire Ant



Avoid snakes in your yard by keeping the yard clean. Remove piles of debris, trash, and fallen branches to help eliminate areas that snakes may be hiding.



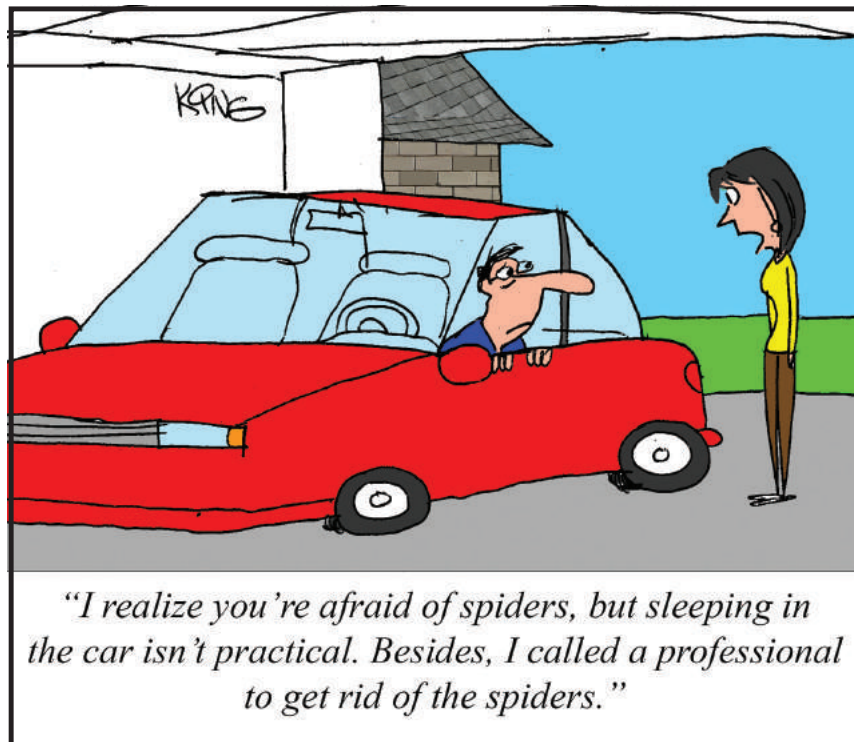
Spring Into Action When Rainy Weather Brings in the Bugs

While spring is a rejuvenating time of year, one downside of the lovely season is the onslaught of rain showers. Pests that have been hiding away during the cold winter months are beginning to emerge outside; however, rainy weather conditions can cause those emerging pests to seek shelter in your dry home.

When the ground outside becomes saturated with water and begins to pool around the yard, ants that live in the ground will begin to seek higher ground to evade the pouring rain. When the ant's nest becomes flooded, often they will seek shelter in your dry home. Termites could potentially become a problem

if there are areas around your home's foundation, or roof, that have been exposed to water and are beginning to rot. Other non-common pests, like millipedes, may also seek shelter in the event of a heavy rain.

Walk around the perimeter of your home to identify any problem areas and to ensure the grade of the ground around the foundation is sloped and draining water away from the foundation. If you encounter any of these pests, give us a call to determine any moisture issues and help prevent pests from seeking shelter inside your home. ■



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