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SEPTEMBER/OCTOBER 2010  
Vol 22 No 5

## THE PEST BULLETIN

# Rats & Mice Begin Fall Invasion

Both rats and mice are serious pests all year, but the most calls for help come during the fall and early winter. This is the time when the weather begins to change and rodents more aggressively invade structures, looking for a better place to spend the months ahead.

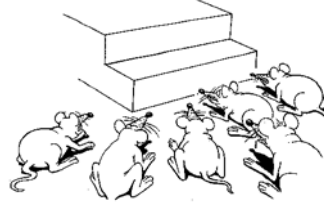
It's quite easy for these pests to get inside most homes. Even adult mice can squeeze through openings just  $\frac{3}{8}$  inch wide. If they can poke their head through, they can get the rest of their body through, and their heads are smaller than they look! Most adult rats can squeeze through a gap only  $\frac{3}{4}$  inch wide, and juvenile rats can squeeze through

even smaller openings.

One way these pests get indoors and pass between rooms are the gaps around utility pipes and wires. They can also easily

scoot through hidden gaps under many outside doors. Once inside, they multiply rapidly. One female mouse can give birth to as many as 50 mice within just one year. Since each female can give birth just 55 days after being born, within a year the total population, unless controlled, could be *500 mice!*

Rats and mice not only can carry a



great many diseases themselves, they also carry ticks and other parasites that can transmit diseases to humans when they suck our blood. As if that isn't bad enough, they

eat and contaminate food, bite both people and pets, cause gnawing damage and fires (see back page), and are a source of allergens.

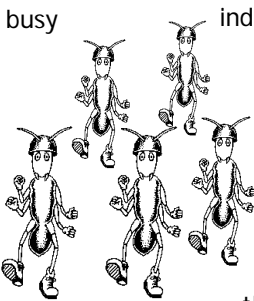
If you know someone who may have mice or rats, let them know they can call us to get rid of them. Don't take chances with these common and serious invaders.

# Argentine Ants Moving Indoors

It is shaping up to be another busy fall season for Argentine ants. These invasive ants arrived on coffee ships from Brazil around 1890. They quickly spread and are so successful that they drive out our native, less aggressive ants that have smaller colonies.

With no significant natural enemies, Argentine ants are thriving in the U.S. Their colonies have multiple queens, which means they can multiply faster. Rather than fighting with neighboring Argentine ant colonies, their colonies cooperate and form huge super colonies. You might say all Argentine ant colonies are just one big happy family—which means big trouble for humans and the environment. Studies are showing that aggressive and invasive pests like Argentine ants have a very negative impact on native ecosystems.

Argentine ants invade homes year-round—whenever outside it gets too *wet, dry, cold, or hot*, they tend to come



indoors. But in the fall two things happen that exacerbates the problem. Their natural food supply, made up largely of sweet honeydew produced by sucking insects like aphids, starts to dwindle after being abundant since spring. At the same time,

the ant population has been constantly growing throughout the spring and summer, so by fall their colonies are HUGE and they hunt even more aggressively—like in your kitchen—for other food sources.

Because Argentine ants are constantly re-invading from other areas, regular treatments are needed to stop new colonies from setting up camp in and around homes. If any of your neighbors or friends are experiencing problems with this or other ants, ask them to call us to control them. *We're ant experts, and here to help!*



Here's your delivery ma'am  
—the cheese you ordered online.

The American Cancer Society says that you should eat *9-13 servings* of fresh fruit and vegetables every day. DO YOU? How would you like to eat 17 different FRESH fruits and vegetables every day for *only \$1.32*? And have your children eat theirs for FREE?

For information:  
**CALL 916-807-4343.**  
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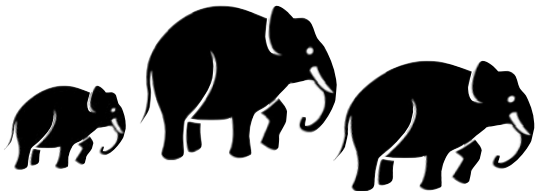
*Thank you for your business and referrals!*

## Elephants Remember Bees

A bee's stinger cannot penetrate most areas of an elephant's tough hide, but it can penetrate around the eyes where the skin is much thinner, and on the inside of an elephant's sensitive trunk. Stings in these areas apparently are very painful and an experience an elephant remembers.

New research shows elephants make a specific rumbling sound, or alarm call, to warn their fellow herd members of imminent danger when bees are discovered. When this rumbling sound is recorded and played to other groups of elephants, it causes them to respond with similar alarm. Even a recording of buzzing bees elicits the elephant's alarm call.

Some farmers in Africa have begun using "beehive fences" to keep elephants out of areas where crops are growing. These fences are composed of beehives strung on wires. When elephants try to push through the wires, it shakes the hives violently and the bees swarm out and sting the elephants. The elephants quickly learn to avoid areas protected by the fences. Farmers like these fences because the hives also produce honey and other products, which can be harvested and sold.



## Help Prevent Rabies!

September 28 is World Rabies Day, a day to raise awareness about rabies and enhance prevention and control methods. Before 1960, rabies was transferred to humans primarily by infected domestic animals, especially rabid dogs. Because of vaccination programs for domestic animals, today 93% of all rabies cases in humans come from contact with wild animals, especially raccoons, bats, skunks, and foxes. Rabies cases among cats are increasing, and now cats are four times more likely to become infected than dogs. Rabies is present in every state except Hawaii.

We encourage you to learn more about this preventable but deadly disease by visiting the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention web site at <http://www.cdc.gov/worldrabiesday/>.



## Your Questions Answered

**Q.** Are bird and bat droppings a health hazard?

**A.** Yes! They can contain a number of disease-causing organisms. Histoplasmosis, the most common disease associated with bird and bat droppings, is caused by inhaling spores of the fungus *Histoplasmosis capsulatum*. Most infections cause only minor influenza-like symptoms, but in unusual cases it has killed people.

People inhale the fungal spores when they disturb an accumulation of bird and bat droppings where the fungus has been growing. Interestingly, the fungus is NOT found in fresh bird droppings—apparently because the droppings are too acidic for the fungus. It is more likely to start growing where there has been a large infestation of birds for several years, either indoors or outdoors.

The fungus can also grow in bat roosts, and unlike birds, in piles of fresh bat droppings.



## Rodents Can Cause Fires

Rodents often amass piles of hoarded food that they consume later. These stashes can become fire hazards as well as a food source for insect pests.

Recently a fire damaged the kitchen of a home having a problem with mice in New Hampshire. Upon closer inspection, fire inspectors found



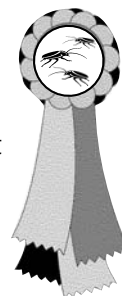
the cause of the fire—a rodent had stashed a pile of dog food around the dishwasher's heating element, pump and fan. The hoarded food prevented the dishwasher from ventilating properly.

Although dishwasher fires are uncommon, experts estimate that about half of all structure fires of "undetermined origin" are caused by invading rats and mice. This is due to their habits of hoarding food, building nests of easily flammable materials, and gnawing on almost anything, including electrical wires.

## "The Best Food is Over Here!"

New research has shown that cockroaches behave like mini-restaurant critics, sharing recommendations about the best places to eat. It is well known that cockroaches spend most of their time in groups. In fact, there is a pheromone (a chemical scent) in their droppings that attracts other roaches. But even where there are no roach droppings, roaches will tend to group together and eat from one piece of food more than another identical piece. Scientists believe there may be a scent either in their saliva or on the outside of their bodies that tells other roaches, "This is a good place to eat."

If scientists can identify this substance, it could be used to make traps and baits more attractive.



ROACH SEAL OF APPROVAL