



## Travel Tips

**P**ests are not at the forefront of our thoughts during the hustle and bustle of the holidays. If you are staying in a hotel or new place, do your best to protect yourself from bed bugs. There are a few simple precautions you can take that can significantly decrease the likelihood that you will bring those dreaded blood-suckers home with you. When you first enter your room, pull the luggage rack away from the wall and keep your luggage there during the duration of your stay. Then, inspect the bed while paying extra attention to the region closer to where you will lay your head. Examine behind the headboard if possible, though in many

hotels it is anchored to the wall. Pull up the edges of blankets and sheets to examine the ridges of the mattress. Look for any small, dark spotting that is bed bug feces, as well as live bed bugs. If you do find what you think is evidence, call the front desk and alert them to the issue.

When you return home, put dryer-safe items in the dryer on high heat for a few minutes if you are concerned you may have brought bed bugs home. If you are concerned about bed bugs or would like to know more about them and how we can help, let us know and we will be happy to assist you.

## Three Tips for Winterizing Your Home



To help reduce pests this winter, store dog food and dry goods in sealed metal or plastic containers.

**G**etting your home ready for winter and the pests it brings is easy as 1, 2, and 3! Follow the steps below to winterize your home and reduce those pesky pest problems. Just remember, with so many tiny areas to consider around the home where pests can enter, it may be impossible to tackle every arising pest issue without a trained professional. Contact us for any of the unexpected pest problems you encounter this winter.

### 1. Eliminate resources

Pests mainly come indoors looking for suitable shelter, moisture, and food. Check leaky drains and pipes, both indoors and outdoors, to eliminate moisture sources for insects. Also check the drain

spout outside to ensure that all water is being drained away from the house, to prevent creating a moisture problem near the home foundation. Inspect the eaves and fascia around the outside of the house for any areas of wood that may have rotted and replace wood that is damaged. Rotted, wet wood is an excellent attractant to many insect pests, especially dreaded termites.

During the busy holiday season, food becomes abundant as we celebrate with friends and family. Avoid attracting rodents and other pests by storing foods in sealable containers. For dog food and other dried goods, use plastic or metal bins that seal tightly to prevent pests from chewing through bags or cardboard containers. Simple sanitation practices *continued on page 2*

# Winterizing

*(continued from page 1)*

like taking the garbage out, not leaving dirty dishes in the sink, and vacuuming crumbs will also help keep pests at bay.

## 2. Seal it up

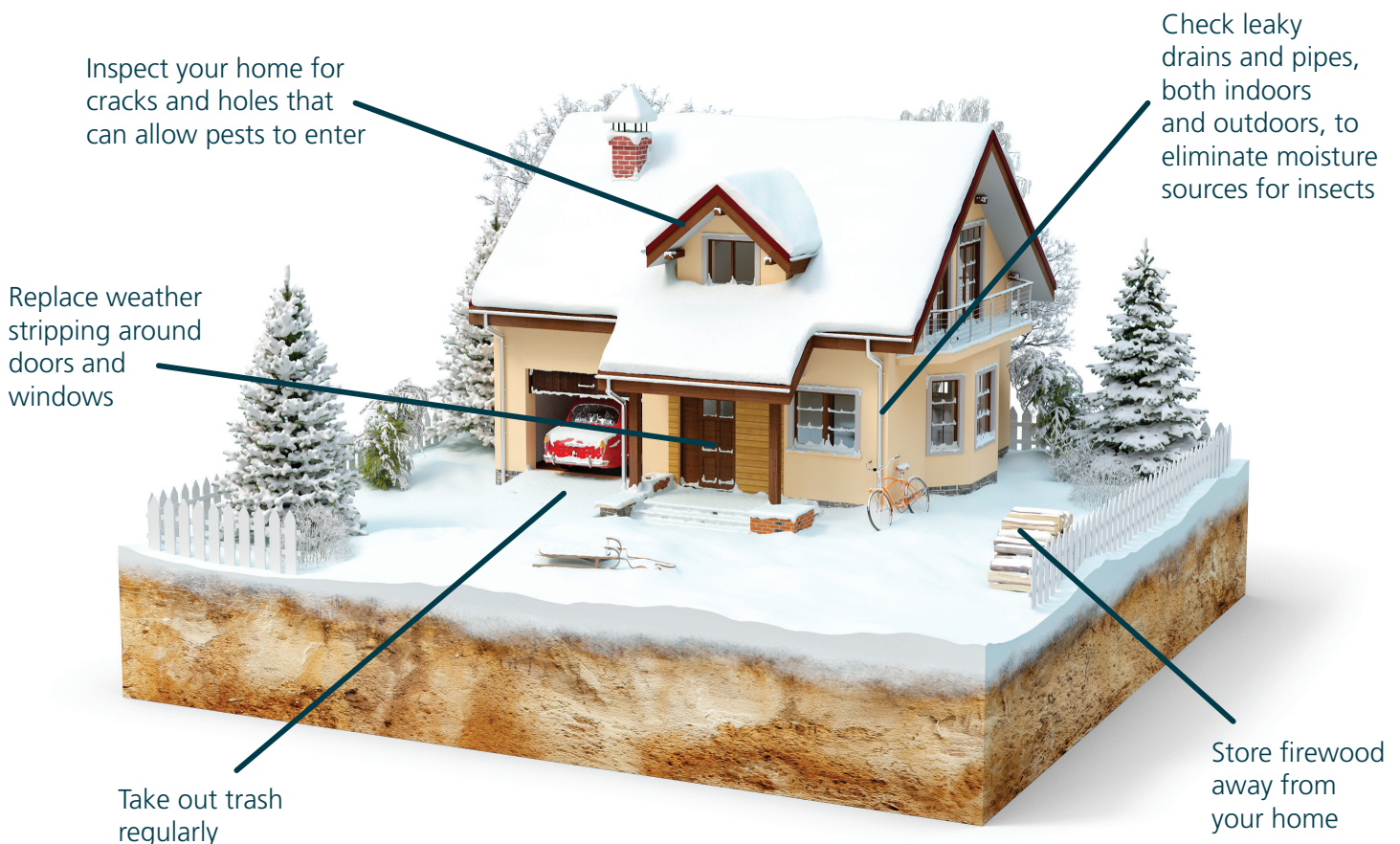
To prevent insects from entering your home in the first place, it's important to thoroughly inspect your home and seal any cracks and holes that an insect or other pest can get into. As you inspect your home, look in areas where you see light easily coming in — if you can easily see light, then an insect can most probably enter.

Replace any old, worn weather stripping around doors and windows. Be sure that all windows and doors properly close. Seal cracks and crevices with an appropriate sealant or caulking product. Large holes and areas surrounding plumbing and/or utility penetrations should be stuffed with steel wool to prevent rodent entry. Many of these areas will be sealed with foam insulation, which is great for conserving heat; however, rodents are capable of chewing through foam insulation. Inspect and replace any damaged foam insulation, first by stuffing the area with steel wool and then using foam insulation.

## 3. Keep firewood outdoors

Nothing makes a cold, snowy day better than a warm fire in the fireplace. However, firewood provides great shelter for a multitude of insects, including wood boring beetles and cockroaches. Firewood should be kept outdoors to prevent bringing pests indoors.

Pests inside of firewood warm up when brought inside and then become active inside of your home. Only bring firewood inside your home if you are going to use it soon. If you can't use all the firewood in one day but won't be storing it for long, you can keep the wood in a cool garage or on cold concrete elsewhere to prevent insects from warming up and emerging out of the wood. For longer periods of storage, do not store your firewood against your home or beside a building, because this can cause long term problems with ants and termites. Be sure to use the oldest firewood first. The older the firewood is, the more likely it is infested with insects. ■



# FACT OR FICTION

## Common Myths About Pests in Winter



**Pests do not survive the winter**

**FICTION**



**Pest management services are not needed in the winter**

**FICTION**



**You can help prevent pests from entering the house in the winter**

**FACT!**

Indoor heating is essential to many of us, especially for people who live in areas that receive heaps of snow and the occasional ice storm. Unfortunately, those lovely conditions we create indoors are also extremely inviting to outdoor pests looking to escape the winter wonderland as well. Insects are cunning creatures that have adapted multiple ways to survive cold winter months.

Most insect populations will dwindle and be very low during winter months. To survive, insects will overwinter in various stages, many as eggs, until temperatures begin to rise again — signaling that it's time to wake up and emerge from their eggshell. Some insects will also undergo something called diapause, essentially hibernation, initiated when daylight hours get shorter and temperatures begin to drop. An insect in diapause uses only a fraction of their normal energy and survives on stored body fat during the entirety of winter. Another amazing feat of insects is their ability to survive

freezing temperatures by producing glycerol in their bodies. The production of glycerol in insects is akin to antifreeze in a car, thus allowing insects the ability to supercool and survive extreme winter conditions.

One way insects overwinter is by hiding in tree holes, under bark and leaves, or even below the soil surface to avoid cool temperatures until the weather becomes more favorable. When these sites are not available, many insects turn to the inside of our homes for protection, where there are multiple cracks and holes for an insect to survive the cooler months.

Fortunately, there are ways to help keep pests at bay during the frigid winter months. Even if you begin preparing your home early in the fall to prevent sneaky pests, insects are incredibly small and resourceful in their ability to enter homes. Call us when the inevitable pest does enter your home to identify the intruder and help prevent any further pests from spending the winter in your home. ■

# Sneaky Winter Pests

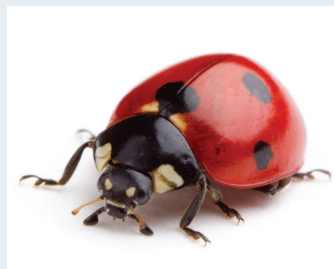
*Rodents and Beetles and Bugs, Oh My!*

Some common pests you may encounter in your home this winter are rodents, lady beetles, and stink bugs. All are a nuisance in different ways. Lady beetles and stink bugs can enter in high numbers and cause odors and discoloration to walls, while rodents are alarming because they can spread bacteria and disease.



## Rodents

Rodents begin to move indoors as temperatures get colder to find warmth. Rodents, such as rats and mice, are capable of entering through the tiniest of holes. Mice, for instance, have been known to be able to move through a hole the size of a dime. Rodents are also infamous for their sharp teeth that can chew through walls, insulation, and electrical wires. Damaged electrical wires are hazardous and a fire risk within homes. Check your home for signs of rodent droppings, gnaw marks, scurrying noises behind walls, and an accumulation of shredded paper hidden in dark corners, indicating a nesting site. If you do find rodent signs, the best approach is to call us to make sure rodents are quickly removed to ensure the safety and health of your family.



## Lady beetles

Lady beetles, often called lady bugs, are common throughout the United States, especially the multicolored Asian lady beetle. Most people are familiar with their yellow, orange, and red colors with tell-tale black spots. Even though you may be familiar with lady beetles, it can still be alarming when lady beetles move en masse to the outside of a building, entering through attic vents and holes typically near the eaves and windows of a home. Vacuums with hepa-filters can be used to suck up lady beetles or simply brushing them off the wall using a broom is an alternative for removal. However, lady beetles can cause smells and wall discoloration if smashed. Therefore, if removal is not working or a viable option, call us to manage any infestations and help you proactively prevent lady beetles in the future.



## Stink bugs

If you have ever attempted to swat, or even worse — smash, a stink bug, then you quickly learned how stink bugs earned their namesake. Stink bugs emit these odors to deter predators from eating them. Unfortunately, they don't distinguish between you or a bird when releasing their putrid odors out of small holes located on their abdomens. Stink bugs will overwinter within your home, but typically stay hidden in wall voids or attics until spring time, when you will see them emerge from your home. The best action for stink bug control is prevention, so call us today to discuss a proactive program to help prevent stink bugs from entering your home this winter. ■