



Pigeon Pests

During the winter months, you might find yourself daydreaming about spending a lazy afternoon in the park feeding the pigeons. But before you let your imagination run away with you, it's important to know that the prolific pigeon can also be a pest.

Pigeons, also known as Rock Doves, are monogamous and will lay one to two eggs which hatch within eighteen days. Young are fed "pigeon milk" which is regurgitated food from both males and females. While mating occurs year round, the peak mating seasons are spring and fall.

Pigeons prefer grains for food and people will commonly feed pigeons unintentionally by spilling food or it in open trash containers. Pigeons roost in areas above ground and will readily nest in steeples, as well as voids on outside areas of buildings and other protected areas.

Pigeons are dependent on humans to provide them with food, roosting and nesting sites. They are commonly found around agricultural areas as well as warehouses, feed mills, and grain elevators. They are also commonly found in cities around parks, buildings, bridges, and any other structures.

Pigeons are filthy birds, causing disease and damage. Their droppings are known for triggering human slips and falls, as well as accelerating the aging of structures and statues. This makes it imperative to get rid of pigeons in highly trafficked areas. More seriously, pigeons may carry diseases such as cryptococcosis, toxoplasmosis, salmonella, food poisoning, and more. Also, their droppings may harbor the growth of fungus which causes histoplasmosis. Other pests may live on these birds, including fleas, lice, mites, ticks, and other pests. ■



Ladybugs

Lady bird beetles, *aka* ladybugs or lady beetles, are generally considered beneficial insects, and in fact, you can often buy them at the local garden store for use in your own garden. They have voracious appetites for aphids and other pests of garden plants, so gardeners love them ... in the summer.

But in the winter some species of ladybugs like a protected structure, *like your home!* As temperatures cool, in move the lady beetles! You often find them congregating in great numbers on the sunny southwest side of a building. They slowly find their way into structures under eaves and siding, through cracks and around screens. Soon, you could be sharing your living space with lady beetles; sometimes *thousands* of them!

Lady beetles are a nuisance, can bite, emit an odor, and can stain some surfaces with a yellow secretion they produce. Some people also have asthmatic reactions. Once inside, it is easiest to remove them by vacuuming. After you've vacuumed, remove the vacuum bag and throw it away outside.

Sealing cracks and crevices is a permanent way to prevent them from entering a building. Pay special attention to areas such as cracks around windows, doors, soffits, fascia boards, utility conduit openings, etc. These can all become common entry points for the beetles. Door sweeps and weather stripping can close gaps below doorways and other entry points.

'Tis the Season ... for Winter Pests

Each season of the year brings a different set of pest challenges. In many areas of the country, the cooler winter temperature means fewer insect pests entering from the outdoors, but that doesn't mean winter is time to let down your guard. Some pests can infest homes year round, and others actually wait until the weather cools before they seek shelter in your home. The house mouse and the German cockroach are examples of common pests that can be found during the winter months. Read on to discover ways to spot an infestation and prevent one from getting started in the first place.

House Mice

House mice are the most common rodent pest infesting homes. The first signs that a mouse has taken up residence in your home are the tell tale droppings that they leave behind. In addition to be a nuisance, these unsanitary droppings can also contaminate food. House mice produce up to 75 dropping each day and they leave them behind wherever they travel, even your cupboards! To make matters worse, mice produce tiny droplets of urine, which contains proteins that cause allergies and exacerbate asthma symptoms.

As the weather cools, mice will often seek shelter inside homes for the winter. Some mice may leave in the spring, but others may stay in the home breeding year round. To help reduce the likelihood of mouse

Winter Pests (continued from page 1)

invasions there are some simple prevention actions that you can take. Mice are able to squeeze through extremely small holes, so seal any holes on the exterior of your home that are larger than a dime and close any gap that is wider than the width of a pencil. Mice are opportunistic, so replace damaged weather-stripping and repair loose mortar around basement foundation and windows, these entry routes make it easy for rodent to get from the outside. Inside the home, make sure to keep storage areas clean and reduce clutter, this reduces the places that mice can use to make their nests. Reducing clutter also, makes it easier to spot rodent droppings early, increasing the likelihood of fast control.

KNOW THE SIGNS OF MOUSE INFESTATION

Scratching or gnawing noises in the walls or ceiling

Food packaging with gnaw marks

Rodent droppings



TIPS FOR PREVENTING COCKROACH INFESTATION

Reduce Clutter – Eliminating clutter can help you spot infestations sooner

Seal Cracks and Crevices in the Kitchen
Sealing cracks helps to reduce the places that cockroaches can hide

Eliminate Sources of Moisture
Eliminating leaks and fixing dripping faucets can make it harder for cockroaches to find the water they need to survive

Clean cupboards and under/around appliances – Wipe up spills and clean up crumbs as soon as possible.

Cockroaches

The most common cockroach infesting structures is the German cockroach. German cockroaches are not just winter pests. A home can become infested at any time of year, and populations can increase very rapidly. German cockroaches feed on food debris like crumbs or grease that build up in kitchens. They especially like warm areas of the home that have an abundant source of water like kitchens and bathrooms, but when infestation levels get extremely high they can be found throughout the building.

German cockroaches prefer to avoid light, spending most of their time during the day hiding in cracks and crevices. They reproduce fast, in fact a single cockroach can produce batches of up to 30 eggs at a time, and the offspring can be ready to reproduce in as little as 40 days.

Cockroach control and management are important for health and safety reasons. The National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences (NIEHS) reports that one-in-five children in the United States have severe sensitivities to cockroach allergens, which increase the severity of asthma symptoms. These allergens are most commonly introduced in homes through cockroach saliva, droppings and the decomposing bodies of these pests. ■



There's a Hole in Your Sweater!

As winter approaches, it's time to get out the sweaters. But wait, in the middle of your favorite sweater ... a hole! Could it be moths? While the age of synthetic fabrics have made moth damage less common, the trend towards traditional fabrics such as wool means that the damage could be from moths. There are two common types of moths that damage clothing and fabrics, the casemaking clothes moth and the webbing clothes moth. It really doesn't matter which type of moth you have, you just know that you need to get them under control and save your clothing. It is always good to know your enemies, however.

Casemaking Clothes Moth (*Tinea pellionella*)

The casemaking clothes moth is named for the silken case spun by the larvae. This entire larval unit moves as the larva moves. The casemaking clothes moth prefers warmer climates; however, with the comfort of heated rooms, the moth does well in most climates indoors.

The casemaking clothes moth adult is tan to light brown and can be up to one half inch long. There may be three darker spots on the wings.

Females may lay up to 85 eggs on natural materials such as wool. They prefer materials of animal origin but will feed on plant items such as herbs, food items, and natural fibers such as rope. Development from egg to adult can take from six to fifteen weeks. Larvae feed on the food materials and drag along the "case" as they move from area to area of the food source. Damaged materials appear that the fibers were scraped away from the cloth so that there is appearance that the material is threadbare.

Webbing Clothes Moth (*Tinea bisselliella*)

The webbing clothes moth is the most common clothes moth found domestically. Adults appear similar to casemaking clothes moths, but have no spots on the wings. Webbing clothes moth adults also have a tuft of red hairs on the top of the head. While most homeowners will never be this close to an adult moth to compare hairs, if specimens are found, you might be able to see the red hairs.

The webbing clothes moth spins a web that can appear to be a flat silken small mat. The moth larvae feed on materials of animal origin including furs, woolens, feathers, and even in food products such as dried milk.

The total life cycle can take from as little as a moth to several years depending on the food source and conditions. This pest is most devastating to furs as they will cut off the hairs of the fur at the hide level leaving "blotches" or patches of missing fur. This type of pest is the reason that many furs are held in storage in the off season.

Control of Clothes Moths

If you see suspicious holes in fabrics or if you see webbing in clothing, contact us for a thorough inspection. After we inspect the closets, storage areas, and the fabric, we will be able to tell you whether it appears that you have an infestation. If you do have an infestation, our trained professionals are equipped to track the source using extensive inspections and even lures to find the source. Then a targeted treatment can be done using products directed only at the infested area. This means minimal disruption for you, the customer, and will lead to peace of mind protecting those beautiful natural fibers! ■



Webbing clothes moth
Casemaking clothes moth