

PEST Gazette

~ COMMON SUMMER PESTS ~

Certain pests seem much more common during the summer months. These pests include: filth flies, bats, stinging insects, ants, skunks and other urban wildlife. During the summer months while you're outside enjoying nice weather and longer days these pests can really put a damper on your plans. Although many of these pests

do not cause significant damage to your home or business, they can threaten your health and interrupt your daily activities. For example, besides being bothersome, filth flies can also transmit a wide variety of diseases to humans. For those who suffer from allergies, some stinging insects can cause major health risks.

If you are having trouble with any of these common summer pests, our professionals can perform a thorough survey, identify the pest causing trouble and work with you to develop an effective and efficient pest management program.

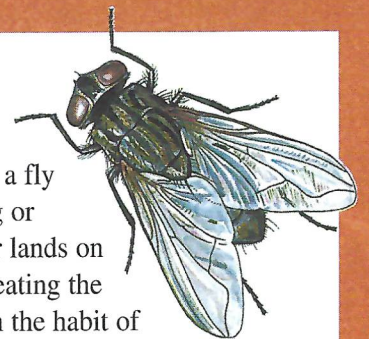
Call us today to schedule an appointment to meet with one of our trained professionals.

FILTH FLIES.....

These pests are aptly named. They breed in filth such as moist or decaying organic matter or excrement, and they feed by "spitting out" saliva and former stomach contents onto their intended next meal. After a few seconds, they suck up the fluid they spit out, along with anything it might have dissolved. Not a pretty sight. But what's worse is that they spread serious diseases.

There are about 200 species of filth flies and they have been proven to spread more than 65 kinds of human diseases, including: leprosy, typhoid, E. coli, cholera, polio; TB, "Staph" and several other kinds of food poisoning.

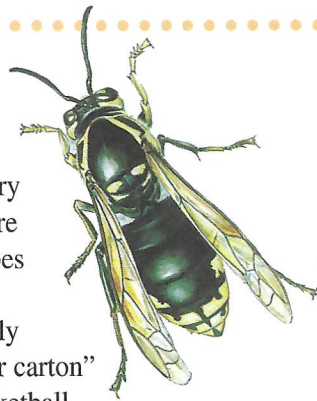
Problems for humans arise when a fly feeds on some filth, such as dung or garbage, then a few seconds later lands on our plate or sandwich, intent on eating the same morsel we plan to eat. Both the habit of regurgitating some of their stomach contents when they feed, and their hairy bodies and feet, make it easy for filth flies to transmit pathogens to humans. Sanitation and mechanical controls can have long-term effects on reducing filth fly populations.



Stinging Insects

As the weather gets warmer, people spend more time outdoors. It's also the time of year when stinging pests are looking for food and increasing their colony size. Some of the most important stinging insects include baldfaced hornets, European hornets, paper wasps, yellow jackets and fire ants. You can help avoid attracting stinging insects and reduce your risk of being stung by: closing up garbage in plastic bags, not leaving partial cans of soda around outside, being careful around flowers and by not wearing strong floral perfumes or colognes outdoors.

Baldfaced hornets are large, 5/8" to 3/4" long, wasps and are black with light yellow to white markings. European hornets are very large, 3/4" to 1" long, wasps and are brown with yellow abdominal stripes and a pale face. Baldfaced and European hornets build large usually grayish or brownish-colored "paper carton" aerial nests, often as large as a basketball. Baldfaced hornets' nests usually hang in an exposed location such as a tree, while those of the European hornet are often located in some protected area, like a wall void, attic or within the branches of a bush. Workers of both



species protect their nests and give a painful sting, sometimes repeated stings, if they or their nest are disturbed. Control of hornets and removal of their nests should be left to a properly trained and equipped professional.

Paper wasps are 5/8" to 3/4" long, with narrow bodies, usually brownish with yellow markings. Some have red markings. They build a grayish-colored, single layer, paper-like comb with cells opening downward, and attached by a single long pedicel to a twig, tree branch, or horizontal surface such as a window frame. The workers are quite protective of their nest and will give painful stings if disturbed.

While **honey bees** are among the most beneficial insects, they can be pests when they end up in our living space after they build hives in walls or nearby bushes. Problem is, honey bees can sting, and some people react violently. Worse, the much-publicized Africanized honey bees, sometimes called "killer bees," have now reached warm areas of the U.S. and seem to be moving further North each year.

By midsummer, honey bees and yellow jackets may reach very high populations. Interiors should not be fogged if honey bees are found living there, because other bees may reoccupy the hive, thus perpetuating the problem. Instead, a pest management company should be called to correct the problem with maximum care and minimal risk to the occupants. Yellow jackets are strongly attracted to the syrup in sodas and may become a dangerous nuisance around open garbage cans or bags, especially in late summer and early fall.

Fire ants - These ants get their common name from their very painful bites and stings. They are small (workers are 1/16" to 1/4" long) yellowish-red to black ants and are located from Virginia to Florida, and from Georgia to California. They usually nest in the ground, but sometimes a partial (or a whole) colony may be located within a structure, usually in a wall void near heat or moisture. The two most important species are the Red Imported Fire Ant (RIFA), *Solenopsis invicta* Buren; and the Southern Fire Ant *Solenopsis xyloni*



BATS BIOLOGISTS have identified 925 species of bats, one quarter of all known mammal species. The oldest bat fossils are around 50 million years old, and paleontologists assume bats had been flying around for a few million years before that. The bat most Americans probably know best in the summer is the Little Brown Bat, which roosts in attics and barns and catches insects in flight at twilight. Although their eyesight is better than most people think, bats routinely depend on their sonar-like echo-location system to maneuver and hunt flying insects.

Medical concerns about bats are mainly the very small, but real, risk of rabies, which is found in less than 1% of any typical North American insect-feeding bat population.

The main situation in which humans are at any risk is when the bat is either sick or injured and falls down within a human occupied area, or at least within a human's reach.

Control of bats, within the continental U.S. and similar temperate regions, is mainly a combination of removal followed by exclusion. As with other unwanted summertime pests, if you have a bat problem, contact your local licensed pest management professional.



Skunks

McCook. There may be as many as 30 to 100 colonies per acre with 80,000 to 250,000 ants per colony. Some colonies have more than one queen and can be much larger.

A typical colony mound is rounded, about 18" high and 24" across. Such mounds have caused farm machinery to break, and farm animals are sometimes killed by multiple stings when they step into a mound. When stung, humans develop a blister-like pustule at the site and true allergic reactions can be life threatening. More than 30 human deaths a year in the U.S. are caused by RIFA stings. Millions of dollars are spent each year, just in the U.S., on controlling the RIFA.

Yellow Jackets - Yellow jackets are 3/8" to 5/8" long, depending on the species, with their respective queens being about 25% longer. Most are black with yellow stripes, but some include red markings, and some are black with white markings. These are day-active, beneficial, predatory insects. Like the hornets, they build paper-like nests containing several layers of cells. A mature colony may have 2,000 - 6,000 cells and 1,000 - 4,000 workers. Nests are sometimes built in open aerial spots, or within bushes, but most species build their nest in a cavity



dug out below ground. Abandoned rodent burrows are common nesting sites. The entrances are guarded as they are very protective of their nest. They can quickly become aggressive if their nest is disturbed. Workers can repeatedly inflict painful stings. Yellow jacket control or nest removal is best left to a professional.

An especially stinky pest in the summer is the skunk. Skunks are active at night (nocturnal). This makes them well suited to establish home territories in business areas since there is little activity in an office complex at night and they can usually go about their lives without most people knowing that they are even there. In the suburbs, skunks frequently set up housekeeping under decks and in crawl spaces where they raise their litter of four to six, which are born in the spring.

Skunks eat a variety of plant and animal materials. In the summer they feed on larger insects, their favorite food; and in the winter they will feed on mice. Skunks will also readily feed on garbage or pet food left outside. As with all mammals, skunks can carry rabies. As always, homeowners should leave the control of skunks to a professional pest management company.

Other urban wildlife species can get a little too close to home too. If you frequently hear scratching, scurrying, little thumps, and hissing or low growls on your porch, roof, or deck at dusk or during the night, it may not be the neighbor's cat. Armadillos, raccoons, opossums or flying squirrels may be the culprits. Any of these creatures can bring with it a few parasites and disease organisms that may infect humans.

Odorous House Ants - When your house is suddenly invaded by hundreds of small-to-medium sized (1/16"-1/8" long), blackish ants, especially just after a heavy rain, they are likely to be Odorous House Ants. Although these ants sometimes make a nest in a wall void or similar place in a house, their main nest is usually outdoors, in the ground by a shrub, or under a layer of mulch. Following their trails to where they disappear into a crack under a door, or other opening to the outside, may help confirm that identification (ID). If you crush one or two of them and they smell like the odor of rotting coconut, this will further help ID them as Odorous House Ants. Their colonies vary a lot in size, with 300 to 300,000 workers, and may include many queens. These ants feed on a variety of foods, but they generally prefer sweets. Both workers and reproductives may live for several years. Workers from

different colonies are not hostile to each other, and routinely share the same trails. Controlling these ants requires that you find their nest and treat it thoroughly with a properly labeled insecticide, if the situation allows that to be done. Unusual structural details, inability to find the nest(s), or customer concerns may require the use of baits. Baiting for any pest always takes longer and depends on the pests' accepting and feeding adequately on your baits.

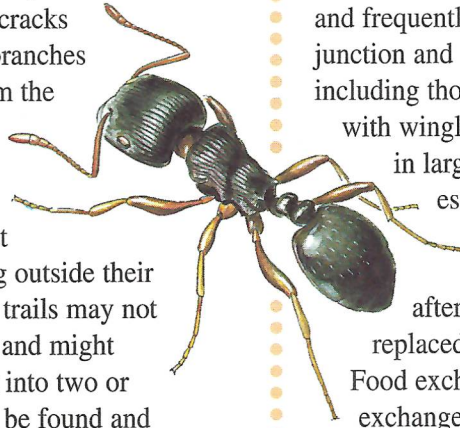


Argentine Ants - Workers of these ants are small, about 1/16 inch (2.5 mm) long, light to dark-brown, often associated with transported items like lumber or potted plants. Outdoors, Argentine ants nest in or under almost any material or structure including: soil, mulch, tree holes, stones, concrete slabs, roof tiles, logs, leaf litter or other debris. They are very aggressive and can

Continued on next page



drive out almost every other species from a site. Their colonies can contain 50,000 - 600,000 individuals. They are omnivorous and will eat any accessible food but prefer sweets and fruits. Cool weather and heavy rains can sometimes cause Argentine ant colonies to migrate indoors. They enter through exterior cracks, weep holes or unsealed doors and nest in wall voids, under carpets, or in insulation. You can help reduce their access to food, nest sites and foraging areas by correcting any moisture problems and sealing up all cracks inside and outside your home. Keep branches and twigs cut back several inches from the roof and sides. An Argentine ant colony can suffer the loss of 99% of their population and still survive and rebuild. Only about 10% of an ant colony's workers are actively foraging outside their nest at any time, so killing ants along trails may not even make a dent in their population, and might cause them to move their nest or split into two or more nests before their main nest can be found and effectively controlled.



Pavement Ants – Lines of small-to-medium sized (1/16”-1/8” long), blackish ants, trailing along water pipes or utility lines, especially from the outside, are very likely to be Pavement Ants. Their average colony contains 3,000-4,000 workers, and has several queens. Outside nests are usually located under the edge of a large stone or a sidewalk. They may nest in wall voids, insulation, under a floor or in ground-level masonry. Foraging trails may be 30 ft. or longer from a nest. These ants will feed on nearly anything, but often show a preference for meats or greasy foods. They are not usually aggressive toward humans but sometimes bite and have a very painful sting as well. Workers of this species are intermediate hosts of two different tapeworms. The ideal way to control these ants is to find their nest and treat it thoroughly with a properly labeled insecticide, if that can be done. Unusual structures, inability to find the nest(s) or customer concerns may require that you use baits. Baiting for any pest always takes longer and depends on the pests' accepting and eating your bait.

White-footed Ants – These are small, about 1/8 inch (3 mm) long, with a single flattened node. They look very much like crazy ants, but have a slightly shorter first antennal segment, and slightly shorter legs. They resemble

odorous house ants, but have a little darker body and very pale (whitish) tarsi. These ants natural nesting sites include hollows in trees, under loose bark or even in or under piles of organic debris. Their colonies have many reproductives and usually number in the millions. There are multiple nesting sites within one colony; and workers, brood, and food are regularly exchanged among ants from different nest sites. They often infest attics of residential structures and frequently cause electrical problems by infesting junction and switch boxes and shorting out circuits, including those in air conditioners. Winged females mate with wingless males inside the colony and then emerge in large numbers and disperse (swarm) and establish new colonies. After she has established a new colony, the de-alated females (which have broken off their wings after their dispersal flight) are nearly always replaced rather soon by reproductive “intercastes.” Food exchange does not occur by way of oral exchange, but instead by way of “trophic eggs” which are produced by all female ants (including de-alated queens, intercastes and workers). Because of this, typical slow-acting baits will not work against these ants. They must be controlled by such means as exclusion and locating along with thorough treatment of all nest sites. In brief, white-footed ants are hard to control and they may suddenly invade a structure in overwhelming numbers. If you think your home or business has been invaded by white-footed ants, call our professionals for help.



Summertime “panic calls” to pest management professionals are not unusual due to honeybees, yellow jackets, or filth flies in a porch area just hours before guests are to arrive. Often the customer discovers bats in the attic or a skunk or two under the deck or in a crawl space.

Homeowners and building managers should leave the control of pests, especially stinging pests and urban wildlife, to a professional pest management company. Call us at the first sign of a problem to avoid more difficult and costly control later.



PIED PIPER PEST CONTROL

P.O. BOX 326 • MONTOURSVILLE, PA 17754
570-368-3600 • 800-372-3601 • FAX 570-368-2236