



## What's Eating My Clothes?

Check the racks of your local thrift store and you're bound to find heaps of wool coats and sweaters riddled with moth holes. Who *hasn't* found little holes in their favorite cashmere cardigan or wool sportcoat?

Clothes moths, specifically the webbing clothes moth or the casemaking clothes moth, are fabric pests found in homes. Their larvae feed on animal fibers containing proteins, including fur, wool, wool blends, silk, hair, feathers/down, mohair, cashmere, and more. You could find damage (or the larvae themselves) on clothing, rugs, upholstery, furs, and even woolen felts on piano keys. Damage generally occurs in hidden areas. Fabrics stained by foods, drinks or perspiration, are more subject to damage.

Clothes moths are weak flyers and are not attracted to lights. They tend to hide when disturbed,

and can often be found close to the infested items. Adults are golden colored with reddish golden hairs on top of the head. Wings are fringed with a row of golden hairs and larvae are small and cream colored.

To prevent damage, dry clean your valuables then store them in **airtight** containers over the summer. Periodically clean areas that may harbor clothes moths, such as under heavy furniture, along baseboards, in cracks where hair and debris accumulate, closets, heaters and vents. After using the vacuum in infested areas, freeze the bag, then dispose of it promptly. Hang infested items in the sun and brush them thoroughly, especially along seams and in folds and pockets. Brushing destroys eggs and exposes larvae.

If these proactive measures do not work, then call us for advice.



Firewood provides shelter for a multitude of insects. Firewood that is not used immediately should be stored outdoors to avoid bringing pests indoors.

## Pest Prevention 101: Chimneys and Fireplaces

Nothing makes a cold, snowy day better than a warm, roaring fire in the fireplace. However, firewood provides great shelter for a multitude of insects, including wood boring beetles, carpenter ants, cockroaches, spiders, earwigs, and springtails. Any extra firewood that is not used immediately should be kept outdoors to prevent bringing pests indoors. It is also best to stack firewood away from the house to discourage any of these creatures from wandering short distances and entering your home.

Only bring firewood inside your home if you are going to use it soon. Pests inside of firewood

will warm up when brought inside and then become active inside of your home. 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. Also, be sure to use the oldest firewood first. The older the firewood is, the more likely it is infested with insects.

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# Keep Your Fleas Away, Please!



**D**o you think if your pets are indoors that your pets can't get fleas? Think again! If your pets occasionally escape to the outdoors or if you live in a duplex or apartment building with attached units, there are certainly opportunities for your furry friends to get dreaded fleas. You also need to consider that even if your pets do not go outdoors, holiday visitors with pets can also potentially bring in fleas along with their holiday cheer.

Another common misconception about fleas is that they all die off in the winter, but fleas can survive through winter months – especially when temperatures do not drop below freezing. Fleas will die in freezing temperatures, but if they are in protected areas like your home then they can easily survive and thrive through colder months.

The most common flea species is the cat flea, but don't be fooled by the name – it will infest both dogs and cats, in addition to wild animals such as racoons, squirrels, skunks and opossums. Bites to humans are typically found around the lower legs and ankles since adult fleas harbor in carpet or on the ground and can jump approximately 8 inches in the air – quite a feat considering 8 inches is 150 times the height of a flea. To put that in perspective, a human with flea like jumping ability would be able to jump 750 feet in the air! Preventative flea medications from your veterinarian can help protect your pet, but give us a call if you experience the winter flea blues. ■



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Installing a chimney cap can help reduce the entry of pests and help limit rainwater and moisture buildup in your chimney that can lead to other pest problems within your home.

## Chimneys and Fireplaces *(continued from page 1)*

Before bringing in firewood, make sure there are not bird or other animal nests on or near it. These nests can harbor mites, ticks, and fleas. Keeping your firewood tightly wrapped and covered can help reduce the number of critters inside it. Before you bring wood indoors, brush off any soil or debris first and use firewood very soon after you bring it indoors. The shorter the amount of time it is sitting inside, the less likely any pests will start moving off of it and into the recesses of your home. It's also important to remember that it is never advisable to transport firewood great distances or move it across state lines. The spread of invasive insects is rapidly expanding and is

greatly aided by the movement of firewood. By taking these steps, you will be much less likely to introduce a pest problem into your home this winter.

Don't neglect your chimney during your firewood and fireplace pest prevention. The chimney itself can act as an opening allowing wildlife pests like racoons and squirrels into your home. Installing a chimney cap can help reduce the entry of pests and help limit rainwater and moisture buildup in your chimney that can lead to other pest problems within your home. Call us today to do a detailed inspection of your chimney and to help guide you in proofing your home from pests this winter. ■



## Why Pest Control is Important in the Winter?

**Y**ep, you guessed it – not all insects die off in the winter as you may have hoped. 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. ■



Insect pests have several ingenious ways of surviving harsh winter conditions. Call us if you notice any intruders in your home; we can help prevent further pests from spending the winter in your home.



# Will a Warm Winter Increase Pests in the Home?

**M**uch of the United States experienced extreme weather conditions this past summer and fall. Record rainfall occurred in parts of the country, two major hurricanes affected southern and eastern states, while other portions of the country suffered from drought conditions. Undoubtedly, these weird weather conditions are impacting insects not only outdoors, but also in homes as well.

According to the US National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), 2017 was on record as one of the hottest years yet from the past 138 years that temperatures have been recorded in the United States. Warmer climates affect insects drastically, since they are cold-blooded animals that do not maintain body heat but adapt to temperatures surrounding them in their environments. Insects thrive in warm

temperatures, so shortened, mild winters increase pest pressures both outdoors and indoors.

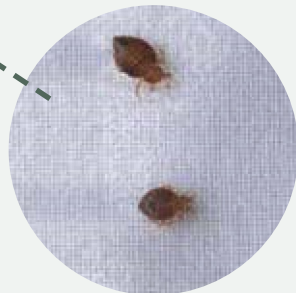
As far as indoor pests are concerned, the pests that are almost exclusively indoors, like german cockroaches and bed bugs, will not be affected by warmer temperatures and differing weather patterns. However, mosquitoes, rodents, ticks, and other outdoor pests can be drastically affected by changing temperatures. In areas that received extreme rainfall, you can expect warmer winters and increased standing water to lead to higher numbers of mosquitoes. In areas that experienced droughts may have problems with rodents coming indoors to seek shelter and water. If you are seeing an increase in pests this winter, contact us to keep your home pest-free, no matter the weather outside. ■



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Drought-ravaged areas may see increased rodents seeking shelter and water indoors.