



WHY FALL DEMANDS ATTENTION

As autumn deepens and outside temperatures drop, many outdoor critters see your home as a warm, safe target. Cooler nights, wetter soil, and shorter days push insects, rodents, and moisture-loving animals from yards and gardens toward the comfort your home provides. Acting early — before pests settle in — gives you the strategic advantage.

PRIORITY PEST WATCH-LIST

These are the invaders most likely to try infiltration during fall in Hampton:

- Rodents (mice & rats) — looking for quiet hidden spaces, warmth, food.
 - Cluster bugs, stink bugs, boxelder bugs, as well as some flies and beetles seeking winter shelter.
 - Spiders — especially those following prey; may indicate other pest activity.
 - Moisture-loving insects: ants, cockroaches, silverfish, earwigs, centipedes, millipedes.
 - Late-season biters (some mosquitoes, fleas, etc.) if mild weather or standing water remain.
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DETAILED TASKS & GUIDANCE

A. Yard & Exterior Environment

Objective: Reduce hiding places, remove attractants, prevent staging or infiltration near the house.

Tasks:

- ☐ Rake and remove leaf piles near home; don't let debris accumulate next to foundation.
- ☐ Keep compost bins sealed and placed at a safe distance from home.
- ☐ Remove or store garden tools, children's toys, buckets, planters, etc., so they don't collect water or soil that could hide insects.
- ☐ Stack firewood off the ground if possible; ensure good airflow; store wood at least a modest distance from the home.
- ☐ Before bringing firewood indoors, inspect for signs of insects.

- ☐ Prune branches and trim bushes so that no plant material touches the house siding, roof, or utility entries.
 - ☐ Use moderate-depth mulch, but avoid heavy mulch directly against walls; consider a gravel/rock buffer along the foundation.
 - ☐ Remove standing water from containers; empty or flip items that collect rainwater.
 - ☐ Clean gutters; ensure downspouts direct water **well** away from the foundation.
 - ☐ Confirm ground slopes away from the home; fix areas where water pools near the structure.
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B. Structural & Entry-Point Fortification

Objective: Block, repair, and seal every accessible entry route. Even tiny gaps matter.

Tasks:

- ☐ Walk entire foundation and siding checking for cracks, holes, gaps, or deterioration.
 - ☐ Seal cracks and gaps using caulk, concrete repair, or expanding foam, as appropriate.
 - ☐ Pay special attention to where utilities, cables, pipes, and HVAC lines enter; seal around those penetrations.
 - ☐ Inspect and screen all attic vents, crawl-space vents, foundation vents; replace damaged or missing mesh.
 - ☐ Check door weather-stripping and thresholds; replace if worn, broken, or missing.
 - ☐ Install or maintain door sweeps on exterior doors to block small pests sneaking in underneath.
 - ☐ Repair or replace torn/damaged window and door screens.
 - ☐ Ensure that all doors fit snugly — no gaps around the frame when closed.
 - ☐ Keep garage doors well-sealed; check for gaps underneath or at the edges.
 - ☐ Inspect sheds, storage buildings, and outbuildings: repair holes, broken boards, loose flashing, open eaves.
 - ☐ Examine roofline, eaves, soffits, attic access, flashing, and chimney exits for small openings; secure or patch them.
 - ☐ Confirm that attic vents or exhaust vents (bathroom, kitchen, dryer, etc.) have proper screening and are not blocked.
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C. Interior Spaces & Storage Management

Objective: Make interior spaces unattractive or inaccessible to pests; detect early signs of intrusion.

Tasks:

- ☐ Inspect attic, basement, crawl space for droppings, nests, shredded insulation, gnaw marks, or noises.
- ☐ Verify that insulation is intact; replace or clean any damaged or contaminated insulation.

- ☐ Ensure proper ventilation; check that vents are clear and screened.
 - ☐ Address any leaks or dampness in plumbing, roof, or foundations immediately.
 - ☐ Store all human and pet food in sealed, sturdy containers that pests cannot easily breach.
 - ☐ Clean up spills and food crumbs promptly — including under and behind appliances.
 - ☐ Empty and clean trash bins regularly; use lids that seal tightly.
 - ☐ If pet food is kept outdoors or accessible, ensure it's securely stored and not left out overnight unnecessarily.
 - ☐ Periodically check stored dry goods (cereal, flour, bird seed, etc.) for insect damage or infestation signs.
 - ☐ Before bringing in boxes or seasonal items from storage, inspect them for pests (e.g. webbing, droppings, holes).
 - ☐ Store items off the floor in damp areas — use shelves or pallets to allow airflow and reduce moisture contact.
 - ☐ Clean storage areas (closets, sheds, basements) regularly — remove dust, cobwebs, and debris.
 - ☐ Replace cardboard/newspaper storage if it becomes damp or shows signs of pest activity; consider sealed plastic bins.
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D. Monitoring & Early Warning

Objective: Detect problems while they are small so you can neutralize them before they become full-blown infestations.

Tasks:

- ☐ Perform a monthly (or more frequent) walkaround of the property: inspect foundation, exterior walls, roofline, and gutter areas.
 - ☐ Inside the home, listen for unusual sounds in walls, attic, or ceilings (especially at night or in quiet hours).
 - ☐ Check behind appliances, under sinks, in utility closets, and near plumbing penetrations for droppings or evidence of small animals.
 - ☐ Inspect common weak spots: dishwashers, refrigerators, washers/dryers, water pipes, etc.
 - ☐ Act promptly on any signs of pest intrusion rather than waiting for them to multiply.
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E. When & How to Use Professional Help

Objective: Know when your own efforts need backup, and make sure the pros you bring in are thorough and preventative — not just reactive.

Consider calling a licensed pest-control service if:

- ☐ You find rodents inside living areas, walls, or attic spaces.

- ☐ Insect numbers are large or persistent (ants, roaches, bugs in walls).
- ☐ You're unsure or unable to fully assess or seal all potential entry points.
- ☐ You want periodic inspections or preventative treatment plans to maintain your home's resistance over time.

When interviewing or hiring professionals, ask:

- What their inspection includes (exterior, attic, crawl spaces, entry points).
- Whether they handle sealing, screening, mesh repair or recommend/perform those services.
- How often they return for follow-ups or seasonal checks.
- What prevention tips they offer (you want education as well as treatment).

SCHEDULING & REPEAT INSPECTIONS

- Begin pest-proofing tasks **before** freezing or very cold weather sets in — ideally when the first consistent cool, damp days arrive.
- Refresh key checks monthly or after major weather events (storms, heavy rainfall, flooding).
- Prior to holiday seasons, house guests, winter storage transitions, or other “busy periods,” run a quick full home check to catch any overlooked issues.
- Maintain the process year by year: pest defense isn't a one-time job — new vulnerabilities arise over time (weather damage, wear and tear, new plumbing or wiring, etc.).

MEMORABLE DEFENSIVE PRINCIPLES

- Seal before pests settle.
 - Remove what the pests need (food, water, shelter).
 - Inspect regularly, act early.
 - Combine your effort with expert support where needed.
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PRINT-FRIENDLY CHECKLIST SUMMARY

Use this list to tick items off as you complete them. Keeping a printed copy (or digital checklist) helps ensure nothing gets forgotten.

Yard & Exterior

- ☐ Leaf and debris removal near home
- ☐ Compost/bin storage distance & sealing
- ☐ Tools, toys, containers stored and drained
- ☐ Firewood stacked off ground, inspected, stored at safe distance
- ☐ Shrubs and branches trimmed away from home
- ☐ Mulch managed; buffer strip near foundation
- ☐ Empty standing water containers
- ☐ Gutters cleaned
- ☐ Downspouts divert water away
- ☐ Soil / grading sloped away from home

Structure & Entry Points

- ☐ Foundation & wall cracks inspected
- ☐ Cracks/gaps sealed
- ☐ Utility penetration points sealed
- ☐ Vents screened and intact
- ☐ Door weather-stripping checked/replaced
- ☐ Door sweeps installed/functional
- ☐ Screen repairs (windows, doors, vents)

- ☐ Garage door gaps checked
- ☐ Outbuildings / storage building integrity checked
- ☐ Roof, soffits, flashing, attic access sealed and maintained

Interior & Storage

- ☐ Attic/basement/crawl inspections (for droppings/nests/leaks)
- ☐ Insulation condition checked
- ☐ Ventilation & screening confirmed
- ☐ Leak repairs addressed
- ☐ Food stored securely
- ☐ Crumbs/spills cleaned promptly
- ☐ Trash handled in sealed bins
- ☐ Pet food storage managed
- ☐ Inspection of stored dry goods
- ☐ Check seasonal boxes/items for pests
- ☐ Storage off floor in damp areas
- ☐ Storage areas cleaned regularly
- ☐ Replace damp cardboard/newspaper with sealed containers if needed

Monitoring & Early Warning

- ☐ Monthly home/perimeter walkaround
- ☐ Listen for noises in walls/attic
- ☐ Check behind appliances, closets, under sinks
- ☐ Inspect plumbing penetrations
- ☐ Act immediately on signs of pests

Professional Support

- ☐ Call pest expert if rodents or major pest signs found
- ☐ Interview services: inspection scope, sealing & screening, follow-ups, prevention advice
- ☐ Consider seasonal check/treatment plans