

PestGazette

FALL 2007

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When You Catch That Cleaning Urge ... Fall is the Best Time to Purge

As summer comes to an end and the fall begins, you may be cleaning house and find that you have old lawn and garden care and home pest products sitting under your sink, or stacked in your garage or shed. Here are some helpful tips on how to safely store or dispose of these products.

As you clean, be sure to wear goggles and gloves. Carefully examine all products you have, checking for leaks or cracks in the containers. Then decide what you can part with and what you may want to keep for next year's season.

If you decide to throw away some products, think before you toss. Many of these products should not go into the trash, especially aerosol cans, which are under pressure and should not be incinerated or punctured.

Next, you should check with your local county on the days that are designated for special hazardous waste disposal. This will protect your family from any unwanted spills and also will reduce chances of accidental ingestion and poisoning.

Keeping Mice and Rats Away *Listen to What the Professionals Have to Say*

Cooler temperatures are coming and you may find a few uninvited guests making their way into your home. Millipedes, crickets and wolf spiders are some common "accidental invaders" that stumble into homes trying to escape the chill of fall. Most of these visitors are not going to cause a problem because they won't be able to survive in the home environment. Commonly, our homes are too dry and there probably will not be enough food to keep these pests alive. However, when they do survive and you find them inside, it is time to give us a call.

Accidental invaders are not the only creatures looking for a safe haven. Mice and rats quickly take advantage of unchecked openings around the home. These creatures, unlike accidental invaders,
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Keeping Mice and Rats Away

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Rats can get through openings 1/2" in diameter. Mice can squeeze through holes no bigger than a dime.



can take up permanent residence, and control can be more difficult and expensive, if and when they become established.

Protect your home from unwanted guests by “pest-proofing.” Take a few moments and allow us to inspect your property and make recommendations that may prevent rodents, snakes and insects from using your home as a winter hideaway.

Here are some things your pest professional will look for:

- Make sure all cracks around the outside of your house are sealed so mice, rats, snakes, and insects can't squeeze in (rats can get through openings 1/2" in diameter — mice can get through holes no bigger than a dime, 1/4"). Openings will need to be filled with something strong like cement, mortar or caulk. Steel wool can be used as a temporary fix. Stuffing cracks with cloth won't help and rodents may use it for bedding.
- Holes and other rodent damage in your home or garage need to be repaired and protected. Make repairs and if necessary, cover the damage with hardware cloth (1/4" squares). If you

cover rodent damage with a piece of wood, rodents may chew through it again.

- Doors, windows and screens should be in good repair and fit tightly. Caulking will also keep pests out and help lower fuel bills.
- Do your French drains need screens? If so, *ask us* to help you select the screen size.
- Check around your dryer vent and other openings to make sure they aren't being used as a handy way to get into your house.
- Check landscaping around the homes perimeter to see if rodents are making use of shrubs as a home. Removing leaves and grass clippings from around the foundation, cleaning out window wells and general yard clean-up will get rid of hiding places for pests near the home.

Source: University of Nebraska-Extension at <http://lancaster.unl.edu>



Oriental Cockroach

Another cooler weather pest often seen in the fall, especially during the rainy months, is the Oriental cockroach. These cockroaches prefer cool, damp temperatures and microenvironments like mulch beds around your home or inside a basement area.

Oriental cockroaches can be identified by using the following description as a guideline:

- Large adults (1 inch long)
- Shiny dark brown to black
- Males have wings covering 3/4 of their body
- Females have very short wings
- Male and female are flightless
- Found outside in moist areas in decaying vegetation (mulch)
- Inside, often associated with sewers, drains and dark, damp cool basements
- Think high humidity and cool temperatures!

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Dangers in the Garden

Be careful the next time your cat or dog “stops to smell the roses” of Indian summer and early fall. Common yard plants can be toxic to most animals, according to the American Animal Hospital Association, a Denver-based professional organization for including veterinarians. The organization suggests keeping your pets away from several plants,



Avocado

Fatal to birds, this plant’s leaves, seeds, stems and skin are considered a cardiovascular toxin. It also can cause kidney or organ failure.



Amaryllis

A showy flower, whether striped or solid white. Yet, its bulb is considered a gastrointestinal and neurological toxin.



Autumn crocus

These pretty, petite flowers are considered very poisonous, not to mention a cardiovascular and gastrointestinal toxin.



Jack-in-the-pulpit

Usually found in the woods, this flowering plant can cause kidney or organ failure.



Poinsettia

The famous Christmas plant can bring on dermatitis in animals. It’s also a gastrointestinal toxin.



Schefflera (a.k.a. umbrella plant)

This leafy green — and often indoor — plant can cause kidney or organ failure.



Yew

A tree or ornamental plant with needle-like foliage, it is fatal to most animals.



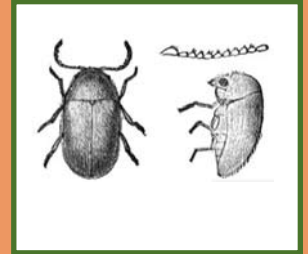
INTERESTING FACT: The cigarette beetle is also native to Egypt. In fact, a beetle was found in King Tutankhamen's tomb!

STOP Cigarette Beetles

The cigarette beetle is one of the most common household insect pests of the United States. It can be found throughout the year, but seems to be more common in the fall and winter months. The adult beetles are oval, about 1/10" long, and are covered with small hairs that give them a yellowish-brown color. Adults are strong fliers and prefer subdued light and temperatures over 65 degrees Fahrenheit.

As its name implies, the cigarette beetle is a pest of dried tobacco either in the stored, bunched form or in cigars, cigarettes, and chewing tobacco. But, it can also feed on bookbindings and leaves. Referred to as a stored product pest, the larval stages of the cigarette beetle can feed on a variety of materials including grain, cereal products, ginger, raisins, dates, pepper, dried fish, drugs, and seeds. It can also infest spices like curry powder, chili powder and paprika. A serious pantry pest, their dietary range makes them very difficult to control.

If you think you have this pest in your home or business, give us a call and talk to a professional. The first step to cigarette beetle control is to find the source of the infestation. This means inspecting all dried foods in the infested cabinets or drawers. Once the infested material is found, it will be destroyed. Your pest professional will then make recommendations for further treatment if required. Be sure to clean all the cabinets and drawers with a vacuum cleaner; and then throw the cleaner bag away!



Source: <http://www.ext.vt.edu/departments/entomology/factsheets/cigarette.html>



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The Dirt on Drain Flies

Drain flies can often appear suddenly and mysteriously, becoming a nuisance in both homes and businesses. Adult flies may become so numerous indoors that they congregate at windows, darken lamp shades at night, fall into food and accumulate around showers, bathtubs, sinks and floor drains, especially in the basement. Outdoors they can ruin fresh paint and plug sewage filter beds (intakes and drains). Since these flies originate in filthy conditions, there is a possibility of human health disease transmission.

Adult drain flies are tiny (1/5" to 1/6" long), fuzzy, gray insects with the body and wings densely covered with small hairs. Wings, appearing too large for the body, are held roof-like over the body when at rest, giving a small *moth-like* appearance. They are weak fliers and make irregular, hesitating flights covering only a few feet in short, jerky lines.

Drain flies reproduce in polluted, shallow water or highly moist organic solids. The eggs, larvae and pupae can be found in the muck,



slime, or gelatinous film often accumulating on the sides of drains and overflow pipes in homes, or in sewage disposal beds, septic tanks and moist compost. During the day, adults rest in shaded areas or on walls near plumbing fixtures and on the sides of showers and tubs. Most activity occurs during the evening when these flies are seen hovering about drains and sinks.

Drain flies do not bite humans but may become a nuisance by their presence in large numbers. Sometimes it takes persistent effort to eradicate an infestation in the home. We will work with you to concentrate on eliminating larval breeding sites from drains in floors, sinks, wash basins, bathtubs, etc. to keep your home pest-free.