Pest Control for the Fall by Ben George

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Fall is typically a very pleasant time of year for people to spend time outdoors. But itâ€™s also a time when many pests are busy looking for a drier and more comfortable place to spend the winter. Itâ€™s at this time that they start gathering on the outside of homes and other buildings, and can invade in huge numbers.

Fall invading insects enter through any exterior crevice or other opening. But they gradually move deeper indoors during the months ahead, attracted to the warmth and lights indoors, until they "spill out" into interior rooms. Here are some of the fall invaders:

Asian lady beetles â€” This orange beetle with black spots was brought into this country to feed on agricultural pests, but they move indoors in the fall in droves, leaving orange-colored stains.

Stink bugs â€” We've always had stink bugs, but the new brown marmorated stink bug is a much more serious pest that is spreading, smells horrible, and often invades in large numbers.

Cluster flies â€” There are several species of these flies, and along with face flies the adults can invade in huge numbers in the fall. Cluster flyâ€”maggots parasitize earthworms.

Rats and mice â€” One by one, these rodents that had been living outdoors start coming indoors in the fall and early winter.

Other fall invaders are boxelder bugs, elm leaf beetles, wasp and yellowjacket queens, crickets, earwigs, entire ant colonies, various wild animals, and bed bugs.

Bed bugs, once a scourge, were almost completely wiped out in this country in the 1940â€™s. But in recent years these blood-suckers have come back with a vengeance, and unfortunately they will become even more of a problem in the years ahead.

Bed bugs apparently originated in the Mediterranean area. They were first reported in England in 1583, and were brought to America on board the ships of the earliest colonists. Bed bugs gradually spread inland from our seaport towns. By the 1800's these bugs were widespread in hotels and boarding houses, where travelers unwittingly picked them up and transported them in their travel trunks. In the early 1900's the bed bug problem became even worse when central heating became common. Before central heating, bed bugs would increase as the weather warmed, but with central heating, bed bugs started multiplying year round. Populations became even larger under these ideal conditions, and there were cases where hoards of the bugs could actually be seen crawling from house to house.

Early bed bug control was difficult. One remedy was to fill the cracks of a bed with gunpowder and set it on fire! Even highly toxic substances like mercury chloride were used. In 1942, DDT, a much safer product than what was being used, was discovered to be extremely effective for bed bug control. With the widespread use of DDT, the bed bug problem disappeared within a few years. It is DDT that we have to thank for the safer products that we use today. As the side effects of DDT became evident, it spurred the development of much safer products and technologies.

Keeping your home safe from pest intruders is a year-round battle. Spring and summer are when the action heats up, even into fall. As the fall season approaches, it is smart to get ahead and prepare for outdoor activities by eliminating the pest around your home. This will ensure that you

can enjoy the beautiful weather without dealing with unwanted pests.

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