

URBAN PEST NEWS



Agent Notes

I've been receiving calls on honey bees as well as box elder bugs. People are curious if they have "killer" bees or why there is a large clump of bees in their tree. Read the article to the right for more information on bees. Concerns with boxelder bugs usually stem from the amount of bugs clumped together. Read the article on the next page for more information.

Chiggers

I'm sitting here scratching my chigger bites, so I thought I would share some information on them so you can avoid them!

Chiggers are parasitic larvae, the immature stage, of mites. Once a host is located, chiggers crawl to a suitable spot on the body and begin to feed. At most, chiggers remain on the body for 3 days, but are usually brushed or washed off before then.

Chigger bites form small reddish areas that may become pustules. Itching peaks around 24-48 hours after the bite occurs, but may last for a week or more. To treat chigger bites, try an antihistamine or a topical anti-itch cream.

Insect repellents containing DEET or picaridin can provide some protection against chiggers in infested areas. Residual spray pesticides can be used to reduce populations in infested areas. Look

for active ingredients such as bifenthrin, cyfluthrin, permethrin or esfenvalerate.



It's SUMMER....Let's Hit the beach!

Honey bees

Honey bees are very valuable insects, producing honey and wax as well as pollinating many of the food crops that we consume daily. When these creatures create hives within wall voids of homes and other structures, they become a pest.

Africanized honey bees and European honey bees look the same and have to be tested in a lab to tell



them apart. Africanized bees are more aggressive when defending the hive, but both types of bees attack when the colony is disturbed by

vibrations from lawn mowing equipment.

There are times when people see many bees clumped together, usually either swarms or hives.



Swarms are large clumps of bees that rest on items such as trees, shrubs, fences, etc. Bee swarms are looking for new nesting sites and have no brood or honey with them. Because of this they tend to be docile. Hives, or colonies, are



from bees building comb to store honey and raise more bees. When established hives are

disturbed, bees attack to defend the colony.

It is an important step in bee work to remove the hive once bees are dead. You can either add this to your services or direct the customer to a contractor.

Always wear
protective clothing
when working with
bee colonies.



Box Elder Bugs

Boxelder bugs are about 1/2" long, greyish with red markings. Red lines run along the sides of the body following the hardened part of the forewing. There is also a red line directly behind the head. Nymphs are solid red, but develop greyish markings as they become older. Nymphs are smaller than adults and lack fully developed wings.

Boxelder bugs usually feed on the seeds from female boxelder trees. They may also feed on other plants such as maple, ash, plum, cherry, peach or grape.

Eggs are laid in cracks and crevices of tree bark in the spring. Nymphs emerge from the egg to feed and mature into adults during the summer. There can often be large groups of boxelder bugs on lawns, trees or sides of homes. Such large numbers of insects can cause panic for homeowners. Explain that the insects feed on plants and there is no need for alarm.

Removing female (seed-bearing) boxelder trees may be beneficial in reducing the number of boxelder bugs in an area.



Tips for your customers:

- eliminate hiding places (rocks, boards, debris)
- seal cracks and/ or pipe penetrations with caulk or expanding foam
- check door thresh holds for a good seal- if you can see daylight around the door when it's closed it should be replaced

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Kissing Bugs & Chagas

**Thanks to Monica with J&J Pest Control for the story idea

Kissing bugs are blood-sucking insects related to assassin bugs which are beneficial. During the day, kissing bugs seek shelter in dark places and venture out to feed at night.

Their bite is relatively painless often leaving no mark. Sometimes people react to bites and get a small, red welt while others may have an allergic reaction.

Chagas disease is transmitted by fecal material of kissing bugs getting into eyes, the mouth or open wounds. It can also be transmitted by blood transfusions or organ transplants and from mother to child during pregnancy. Animals can contract the disease in the same manner as humans, but may also get chagas by eating an infected bug.

Chagas in humans has an acute phase and a chronic phase. The chronic phase occurs 30-40 years after infection. Acute symptoms only occur in 1% of cases and often mimic flu-like symptoms. Symptoms usually last 4-8 weeks and typically go away even without treatment. The chronic stage happens in 20-30% of infected people and results in cardiac problems and enlargement of the esophagus. Dogs show similar symptoms to humans when they contract chagas.

Tips to reduce kissing bugs around the home:

- eliminate rodent & wild animal nests
- seal cracks & pipe penetrations with caulk or expanding foam
- screen windows & vents
- remove firewood & other debris



Photo by Drees

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