

JRG

TERMITE & PEST CONTROL

488 Stagecoach Road • Clarksburg, NJ 08510

888-HIRE-JRG (447-3574)

www.jrgpest.com

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The Pest Bulletin

Carpenter Ants Starting New Colonies

Long before we started using antifreeze in our cars, carpenter ants were using a similar product, *glycerol*, to keep the liquids in their bodies from freezing.

This natural substance their bodies produce gives these ants an amazing ability to survive even freezing temperatures. Unfortunately, it also means that carpenter ant colonies survive the winter intact, ready to cause more damage when warm weather arrives.

In the spring, winged ants, called "swarmers" fly out of mature carpenter ant colonies and take to the air.



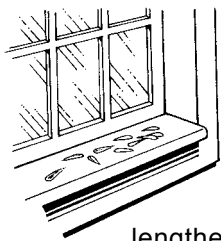
Swarmers are fully reproductive males and females, unlike the more common worker ants, which are sterile.

The sole purpose of swarmers is to establish new colonies. Female swarmers, which will become future colony queens, mate, find protected spots to nest in, lose their wings, and then begin their life-long task of laying eggs.

As carpenter ant colonies expand in size, they also begin to form what we call "satellite" colonies. A large colony may have one, or in unusual cases, up to a dozen or more satellite colonies, and

because these colonies cooperate, they greatly extend the amount of area a colony can cover as they look for food. Often the main, or "parent", carpenter ant nest is located where there is more moisture, either indoors or outdoors; the satellite colonies may be located in a similar or dryer spot.

If you find either winged or non-winged ants you believe may be carpenter ants indoors, or around your home, call us right away to arrange for an inspection and control of these troublesome pests and their nests.



Termite Swarming Alert!

Sometime soon, usually after a rain as the temperatures begin to warm and the days lengthen, large numbers of winged termites will begin to emerge from termite colonies. These winged termites are called "swarmers", and they set out to establish new colonies.

Swarmers are not strong fliers and unless they get carried off by the wind, most will land on the ground within a block or two of where they emerged. They then break off their wings at a special fracture point, pair off with a mate, and begin to crawl about to find a suitable place to start a new colony. If they are successful, the female will become the queen of a new colony. She can live and continue to lay eggs for up

to 25 years!

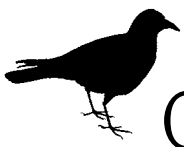
This entire process would be just an awe-inspiring event if it happened out in a forest. But, if the swarmers came from right next to or inside your home, it alerts you that a mature colony is probably infesting your home. Since a colony must be *at least four years old* before it sends out swarmers, seeing swarmers indoors means either a colony has been eating your home for at least four years, or if you are "lucky", an already mature colony recently moved into your home and then sent out swarmers.

If you find swarmers or their broken off wings indoors, call us so we can schedule a professional inspection. We'll design an effective strategy to eliminate any colonies attacking your home—*before they do more damage!*

Pest Prevention Tip of the Month

Prune vines, shrubs, and trees away from walls and roofs. Plants growing within a foot of a wall keep it damper, which leads to more problems with pests. Foliage or branches allowed to touch a building also act as "highways" for pests.





Endangered Birds Saved

Canna, a small island off the coast of Scotland, is just 5 square miles, but it has always been an important breeding ground for herrings, razorbills, gulls, and many other birds. Unfortunately, the Norway rat, which is also the most widespread rat here in the States, invaded the island a number of years ago, and bird populations gradually began to disappear. The rats were routinely eating the bird eggs and chicks, so that by 2005 some kinds of nesting birds were almost completely wiped out. Rats were also wreaking havoc on the properties of the 13 people who lived and farmed on the island.



A decision was made by an environmental trust to try to "de-rat" the island with a massive baiting campaign. Baiting started in August 2005 and ended in January 2006. Through 10 rounds of re-baiting of the traps, an estimated 5,000 rats were killed! The good news is that the massive program appears to be a complete success—since then NO rats have been found on the island, and last summer (2006) bird populations had already started to make a strong comeback.



The World's Biggest Bug

If you go by the ever-popular *Guinness World Records*, and many other sources, the largest insect in the world by weight is the Goliath beetle. But a recent article in the *American Entomologist* shows that the biggest recorded bug is not an adult insect at all, but the larva or grub of a Hercules beetle. At 144 grams, or about 5 ounces, it's about the weight of an obese bluejay—that's big! The largest Goliath beetle larva has been 'only' around 80 grams. As a rule, adult beetles live their lives at about ¼ the weight of the grubs.

The largest adult insect is the weta, a kind of a cricket that lives only in New Zealand. The biggest weta, a female filled with eggs, was weighed at 71 grams—about three times heavier than a mouse!

Ultrasonic Mosquito Repellers Don't Work



Mosquito repellers that work on the principal of ultrasonics or high frequencies are being sold everywhere, from mail order catalogs to department stores, despite the fact that tests in the past repeatedly have shown they have no effect on mosquitoes. New tests just completed in Brazil compared seven new-to-the-market electronic mosquito repellers that emit various frequencies of sound.

The verdict? None work! And in some cases, mosquitoes were slightly more attracted when the device was turned on!

It's true; a few of these devices have a sophisticated look to them. You can place one on your wrist or hang it from your neck, and you'd look smart. We suggest you buy an *iPod* instead—and enjoy the sounds.

Going Out? Don a New Outfit!



Wouldn't it be great to have clothing that repels pests like mosquitoes, ticks, and other biting pests? Now you can! A new line of clothing called *Mumz* (Mumzgarden.com) can be purchased over the internet and in an increasing number of stores. Bound to the fibers is the insecticide Permethrin, which continues to be effective through 25 washings. The special BUZZ OFF Insect Shield application doesn't rub off onto your skin, and is EPA approved. You can buy everything from hats and socks to pants, shirts, coats, and scarves, and garden or hike without being pestered!

Did You Know?

WEST NILE VIRUS DEATHS INCREASING

The threat from West Nile Virus is increasing and spreading. During 2006, there were 4219 cases of mosquito-borne West Nile Virus and 161 people died. This is a 35% increase in deaths compared with the previous year; during 2005 there were only 119 deaths from West Nile Virus.

For 2006, documented human illnesses occurred in 43 states, with the most cases in Idaho, California, Colorado, Texas, Nebraska, and Illinois.

GREAT LIGHTING SETS THE MOOD

Recently it has been shown that for certain kinds of spiders the right light is key to setting the mood for sex. Some spiders have markings on their faces and legs that glow in ultraviolet (UV) light. When these spiders are in full spectrum light that includes UV, the markings glow. The opposite sex, catching sight of them, begins the typical spider courtship rituals, including bending their legs and hunching or flexing their abdomens. (If you're a spider, that must be considered sexy!) But if UV light is blocked so the markings don't glow, most other spiders have no interest in that spider, even if they themselves are in UV light.

