Common Household Pests

Cooperative Extension South Dakota State University

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COMMON HOUSEHOLD PESTS

For safe and effective use of insecticides, always identify the problem correctly.

1. Oriental cockroach
2. American cockroach
3. German cockroach
4. Brown-banded cockroach
5. House fly
6. Black carpet beetle
7. Webbing clothes moth
8. Silverfish
9. Flea
10. Brown dog tick
11. Pavement ant
12. Subterranean termite
13. Powder-post beetle
14. Carpenter ant
15. Boxelder bug

Prepared by Extension Entomologists of the North Central States in cooperation with the Federal Extension Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture
COMMON HOUSEHOLD PESTS

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Cockroaches

Cockroaches favor warmth, moisture, and food; thus they are prime pests of homes. They are seldom seen by day since they prefer sheltered dark places. They come out at night to forage for food. Roaches feed on starch, glue, toothpaste, human garbage and many other food stuffs.

Good housekeeping plus use of recommended household insecticides are the only means of keeping the home free of cockroaches. For best results, apply insecticide where roaches hide—beneath the sink around pipes and conduits, behind door and window casings, baseboards, and molding strips.

Clothes Moths and Carpet Beetles

Several species of clothes moths and carpet beetles are serious pests of clothing and rugs. The larval stages of these pests are the destructive stages; they feed on wool, mohair, hair, furs, and feathers.

To control these pests (a) practice "good housekeeping"; (b) treat susceptible articles with protective insecticides; (c) store clothing articles properly.

Wood Infesting Insects

Three major insects that infest wood in homes are carpenter ants, termites, and powder post beetles. Both ants and termites have winged and wingless phases and are often mistakenly identified. Ants are constricted or pinched-in at the "waistline", termites have no constriction. The rear wings of ants are smaller than the front wings, while the wings of termites are nearly equal in size.

Infestations of subterranean termites are found in nests in the ground close to a source of wood. They often tunnel toward the wood attacking the structure of houses. Control of termites should be done by a reputable pest control operator, who will also make structural repairs.

Carpenter ants are controlled by making structural repairs and painting a suitable insecticidal solution on infested wood and ant runways.

Powder post beetle infestations are detected by small piles of sawdust around shotholes in furniture or new woodwork. Powder post beetles may be controlled by application of insecticides, but advanced cases require the services of a pest control operator.

Houseflies

Houseflies breed in filth and feed on garbage and foods. They contaminate anything they touch and can spread many animal and human diseases. Houseflies can be controlled by using a program of sanitation, screening and suitable insecticide sprays.

Fleas

Fleas become a household pest as a result of an infested pet. Fleas sometimes attack humans causing painful bites. They can be controlled by a combination of insecticides on the pet and the premises, as well as general good "housekeeping practices".

Box-Elder Bugs

Box-elder bugs often invade the home from the outside, from a female box-elder tree. Box-elder bugs do not present a hazard to health, but at times they are annoying. Control is possible by cutting down female box-elder trees, or by spraying the outside of the house and the trees with a suitable insecticide.

Silverfish

Silverfish are slender, wingless insects, which live in dark cool places, and are active mostly at night. They cause considerable damage to book bindings, starched clothing, and foods. Control of this pest is possible by means of a surface spray of a suitable insecticide wherever the insects are found.

Brown Dog Ticks

Brown dog ticks often gain entry to homes by way of the family dog. Normally this tick breeds in sheltered areas. Start control for brown dog tick by treating the dog with a suitable insecticide. Then control the brood of ticks in the home with a household grade insecticide.

For further information on control of these pests consult your local county extension office or the Extension Entomologist, South Dakota State University, Brookings, South Dakota 57006.