

# PestGazette

SUMMER 2010

Brought to you by **Leaf Pest Control**



## Booklice

**B**ooklice, aka *Psocids*, are tiny, soft-bodied insects, less than 3/16 inch long with long, slender antennae and chewing mouthparts. They are usually grayish brown in color and may have four wings or be wingless. Despite being called booklice, they are harmless and do not cause any structural damage. They do not bite or sting and are usually simply nuisance pests. They are more likely to be a problem during mid- to late-summer months.

In homes, they can become household pests by flourishing in damp areas of basements, bathrooms and crawlspaces. Since booklice are generally restricted to humid habitats, one means of obtaining control is to correct moisture and high humidity

problems. The most effective method for controlling them is to reduce moisture present since most do not survive when relative humidity levels drop below 50 percent.

Increasing ventilation with a dehumidifier or fan is effective in reducing moisture. Airing out a room and keeping air moving may be sufficient for control. Repairing any moisture issues (i.e. clogged gutters and standing water puddles) as well as storing boxes, bags, books, and papers off of the floor to minimize exposure to dampness is useful.

If these nuisance pests are appearing in large numbers, please give us a call and we will treat for them and point out the sources of moisture as the cause of their presence. ■

## Itsy-Bitsy, Teeny-Weeny Clover Mites

**W**hat's round and red and can fit on the head of a pin? It's a clover mite — a tiny reddish to dark brown pest often seen on sunny days in early summer months. In some cases they will invade a structure in large numbers. Clover mites are not insects, but belong instead to the arachnid group of arthropods — meaning they have eight legs. They are very small (1/30 inch), oval-shaped and red-colored. They make their way into buildings and homes through window screens, cracks in bricks, and under door sweeps. Clover mites usually appear in May and June, but can also reappear in the early fall. They cause no damage and do not bite, however, if squished on a lightly colored wall or on a piece of fabric such as a curtain or pillow, they can leave a red stain.

Clover mites feed on well fertilized grass and lawns or on rooftops where there is mold or mildew growth for them to feed upon. Once summer tempera-

*Continued on page 3*



Clover mites often appear on sunny days in May or June. They may reappear briefly in early fall until temperatures drop.

Photo ref: <http://www.fumexpro.com/img1/Clover%20Mites.jpg>

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Clover mites are very tiny, only 1/30 of an inch.

<http://www.extension.umn.edu/distribution/housingandclothing/dk1002.html>

## Clover Mites (continued from page 1)

tures heat up to above 85 degrees, clover mites will naturally die back, as their food source also dies back and they cease to be a problem. Sometimes they will appear again briefly during the early fall months until temperatures drop to below about 50 degrees.

To prevent clover mites, keep your home free of grasses and vegetation from around the structure's perimeter foundation. Sealing gaps, cracks and other points of entry into structures and around mortar and sidewalk areas near the foundation will

also help. Shoring up openings with tight-fitting screens and tight-fitting door sweeps are helpful.

If you have clover mites in your home, you can suck them up with the vacuum. Make sure to seal up the vacuum bag and toss it out immediately or the clover mites can simply climb back out. If the problem persists, we can treat for clover mites effectively with miticides. Just remember that hot weather is right around the corner and once temperatures exceed about 85 degrees, the mites should no longer be a concern. ■



Photo ref: [http://www.ppd.org/dd/images/clover\\_mite.jpeg](http://www.ppd.org/dd/images/clover_mite.jpeg)



Clover mites are very tiny, only 1/30th of an inch, and can leave a red stain when squished.

Photo ref: [http://z.about.com/w/experts/Entomology-Study-Bugs-665/2008/08/bugs\\_7.jpg](http://z.about.com/w/experts/Entomology-Study-Bugs-665/2008/08/bugs_7.jpg)

## Cicada Killers

**Y**ou know the dog days of summer are here when you begin to hear the constant hum of the cicadas in the evenings. Their loud droning is impossible to ignore. Someone else is hearing it too — the cicada killer, a large, black and yellow striped wasp who preys upon the noisy cicadas.

When the female cicada killer finds a cicada, she parasitizes it with a sting and then carries it to her nest. Inside the nest, the cicada killer provisions her laid eggs with the parasitized cicada that will become the larva's first meal, once it's emerged from its egg.

Cicada killers are most often seen in mid- to late-July and early-August when homeowners notice huge wasps burrowing in the yard. It is most likely a female cicada killer preparing a nest in the ground to lay her eggs. They prefer dry and sandy types of soils for building their nests. Yards that have favorable nesting sites can become peppered by these burrows and mounds of dirt. To discourage the nesting, homeowners should water the lawn often to keep it very moist.

Cicada killers can be very territorial as they buzz about their burrow openings and, because of their large size, people are easily frightened by them. It is rare to be stung by a cicada killer (unless you are a cicada), but you should keep your distance anyway and let a professional treat for these wasps. Give us a call today! ■



Cicada killers prefer to make their nests in dry, sandy soil.

Photo ref: <http://www.ca.uky.edu/entomology/entfacts/ef004.asp>



Photo ref: <http://www.ca.uky.edu/entomology/entfacts/ef004.asp>



Cicada killers are most often seen in July and August.

Photo ref: [http://www.ppd.purdue.edu/PPDL/images/cicada\\_killer\\_wasp.jpeg](http://www.ppd.purdue.edu/PPDL/images/cicada_killer_wasp.jpeg)



## Ants Marching: Carpenter Ants

“ I keep seeing big, black ants in my house, especially around the bathroom and kitchen. I spray them, but they keep coming back. What are they, where do they come from and how do I get rid of them?”

Carpenter ants are among the largest ants a homeowner may ever see. There are several species of carpenter ants that may be found infesting homes and other buildings.

Normally worker carpenter ants are black or reddish black and range in size from 3/8 to 1/2 inch. Winged queens may be as large as one inch. Carpenter ants nest in moist wood including rotting trees, tree roots, tree stumps, and logs buried in the ground. They can also nest in moist or decayed wood inside buildings.

Nests have been found in bath traps, under sinks, in showers and dishwashers, under roofing, in attic beams, under subfloor insulation, and in hollow spaces such as doors, curtain rods and wall voids. There will often be a primary nest site outdoors in a large, hardwood tree with limbs touching the home. The ants trail inside using the limbs or wires and other utility conduits into the home, and then set up satellite nests in wood that has been moisture-damaged.

These ants are truly carpenters in that they form very smooth galleries carved out in the wood. Some of these galleries on the surface may look very attractive, yet they represent wood that has now lost its structural integrity.

Usually, the first sign of a problem is when a homeowner notices sawdust-like material on furniture below a solid wooden beam in a house. Carpenter ants are nocturnal and the sawdust will seem to reappear each morning with no apparent reason. Homeowners may also see the ants trailing at night along a wooden beam. If you notice this sawdust like material or ants, give us a call and we will eradicate your carpenter ant problem. ■



Carpenter ants are large, black or reddish-black ants which nest in moist or decayed wood.



Carpenter ant galleries in wood.

# Starlings, Pigeons and Sparrows, Oh My!

**D**id you know that all birds are federally protected in the U.S. except for three? Starlings, pigeons and sparrows are not protected and may be removed or eradicated by a pest management professional when they are causing problems. For all other nuisance birds, pest management professionals must obtain a special permit or license from the state's fish and wildlife department for any removal.

Did you also know that pest bird droppings can create health hazards? A roost of nuisance birds can create a large pile of droppings resulting in hazardous walking areas and the acids in the droppings may corrode a car's finish.

But, more importantly, over time a roost full of dried droppings becomes a breathing hazard. Fungal spores may grow rapidly in such droppings, and if the pile of droppings is disturbed, the spores can become airborne and aerosolized and when breathed in, this can lead to a lung disease called *histoplasmosis*.

Pest management professionals have the breathing equipment and experience to safely remove these roosts with dried droppings. If you suspect an old bird roost full of droppings in your attic space or living areas, let us safely remove the droppings for you. ■

A roost full of dried bird droppings can become a breathing hazard over time and lead to serious lung disease.

Starling



Pigeon



Sparrow



## Leaf Pest Control



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