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It's Wise To Protect Your Castle

Throughout history, protective barriers have been vital. In ancient times moats protected castles, and the Great Wall of China was built to keep out hordes of invaders.

Today people rely on us for a different kind of protective barrier. We professionally protect homes and other buildings against invading pests by applying a protective barrier called a *perimeter treatment*.

Using our knowledge and experience, we expertly treat outside, around the foundation, and in other key areas. As pests start to become active this spring and try to invade homes from outside, our treatments stop them before they are able to come indoors.

These protective treatments keep hundreds of different kinds of pests from wandering indoors, including ants, crickets, millipedes, centipedes, sowbugs, and earwigs.

Without a perimeter treatment, some of the entering pests would die within a few days of coming indoors. Even though they may not cause damage, there is still the time and hassle of having to clean up where they've been. But other pests would thrive because the food, moisture, and shelter are perfect for them. These pests then start eating and multiplying indoors—they spread germs, bite and sting, cause expensive damage,



require cleanup, and often become permanent unwanted "guests" until they are controlled.

Pests enter unprotected homes through thousands of cracks and crevices. It's a good idea to caulk and plug holes, but this still won't stop many pests from finding their way indoors. Our protective perimeter treatments and other treatments are a smart, effective way to help protect our homes, their contents, and people and pets from invading pests.

Are Pests Increasing?

It seems like the never-ending battle against pests is becoming more fierce every year. We increasingly hear about pest problems in the news and from friends, and pests are constantly invading our homes and businesses. What is happening?

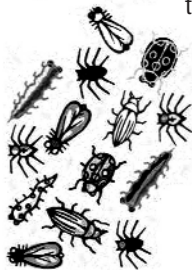
For one thing we are battling a **far greater number of pest species** today than ever before. In fact, almost all of our worst pest species did not even originate in this country. Most or all of our most serious species of mice, rats, ants, cockroaches, pantry pests, and flies came here from other countries, and new pests are arriving every year.

As if that wasn't bad enough, we often **inadvertently promote pest problems**. For instance, increased worldwide travel and other factors have caused bed bugs to become a problem again. This pest problem was nearly

eliminated in the country, and has come back with a vengeance.

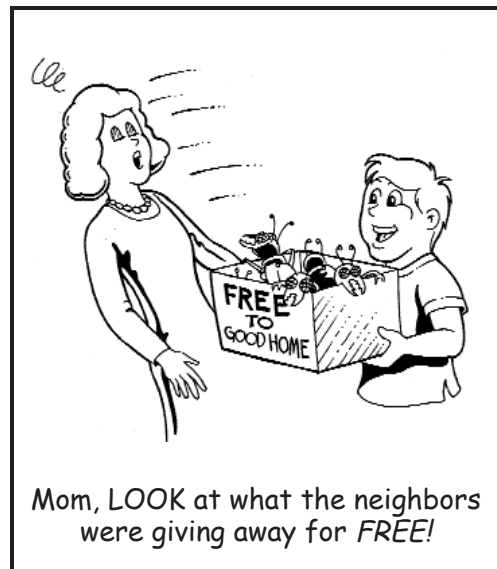
Central heating keeps us warm during the winter, but it also allows termites and other pests to thrive in areas where they weren't previously a problem. Pests are always quick to take advantage of any food, water, or suitable shelter we unwittingly provide them.

And what about the potential for **global warming** we hear about in the news? The earth is gradually warming, due to a variety of causes, and an increase in temperature of just a couple of degrees means longer pest seasons, increased winter survival of pests, more pest-transmitted diseases, and a whole new group of pests to battle. Let's hope that doesn't happen, but we are here and proud to be protectors of your health and property!



Maintain Your Big Investment!

Chances are you've protected your home with a solid homeowner's insurance plan. But do you have a protection plan against the threat of nasty home invaders like termites, carpenter ants, roaches and rodents? Call us to discuss a plan to fit your needs, or visit us at www.HarkinsPest.com.



Mom, LOOK at what the neighbors were giving away for **FREE!**

Butterflies Make a Partial Comeback

The number of monarch butterflies overwintering in mountainous areas of Mexico more than doubled this winter, following a worrisome 75% drop in numbers the previous year.

Millions of these beautiful orange and black butterflies overwinter in the mountains of Michoacan, Mexico. Last winter there were only 4.7 acres covered with the butterflies (the smallest area since record-keeping began in 1993), but this winter there were 9.9 acres. This is still much smaller than the record of 45 acres covered in monarchs in 1996.

There are natural fluctuations in the overwintering monarch population levels due to weather, but deforestation of mountaintop pine forests, due to both illegal logging and severe storms, has been a serious threat to these areas.

No single monarch survives the entire trip from the U.S. and Canada to Mexico, but they lay eggs along the way that hatch and eventually continue the migration. It is still not well understood how the butterflies, several generations later, know where to go—usually the same trees are covered by monarchs every winter.



Rodents are the Key to Lyme Disease

Many people think that the deer population, and climate, are the best indicators of how severe a year it will be for Lyme disease, but a study that came out several years ago shows these are not good indicators.

A study in southeastern New York, a hot zone for the disease, showed that, over a 13 year period, there are two other factors that are much better predictors of how serious the year will be for Lyme disease: the abundance of rodents that act as tick hosts (white-footed mice and chipmunks in this study) in the previous year, and the abundance of acorns (which sustain these rodent populations) two years before. In other words, the risk of contracting Lyme disease in and around oak forests in northeastern U.S. is highest two years after a bumper crop of acorns.

Note that because Lyme disease occurs in areas without oaks, the number of acorns is not a universal predictor. But in other areas, whenever there is an abundance of food for rodents, populations will increase, and tick numbers will increase following that.

While deer spread the ticks, deer abundance was found to not be a good predictor of Lyme disease incidence.

Ticks rarely contract the bacterium from deer—they most often contract the bacterium when they feed on infected small rodents.



Pests Can Carry Resistant Bacteria

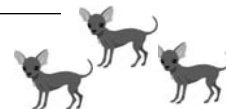


“Superbugs”—bacteria which are resistant to many kinds of antibiotics—are not just a problem in hospitals, but they can also occur on farms where animals are raised. For example, because antibiotics are used extensively in pig farming, many of the bacteria on these pigs have some resistance to certain antibiotics.

What is of concern is that in a recent study, house flies and cockroaches found on these farms were carrying the same antibiotic-resistant strains of bacteria that were in the pig feces. These findings are very significant for public health reasons. Because flies and cockroaches are highly mobile, the risk is that these pests could easily carry antibiotic-resistant bacteria from pig farms to humans.

In light of these findings, the study points out that effective control of flies, cockroaches, and other pests on animal farms is especially important.

This is just one more example of the public health risks of common household pests, and the importance of controlling them, wherever you are.



Dog-Sized Rats Discovered

The bones of giant rats the size of small dogs have been discovered in a cave in East Timor. The rats grew up to 13 pounds—three times the size of the largest living rat species, or the size of approximately *three* chihuahuas! Since the remains are only 1,000 to 2,000 years old, it is very possible that these rats are still living in remote areas of East Timor, much of which is mountainous and inaccessible to humans.

So if someone swears they've seen a huge rat, don't laugh—maybe they did!

Fun Pest Movie Trivia!

Q. How were mustard packs and potato chips used in the movie, *Arachnophobia*?

A. Mustard packs were used as a special effect to depict spiders when they got squashed underfoot. Crushing potato chips was used for the sound effect when the spiders were stepped on or smashed.



Q. In the movie *Antz*, which scene was not included in the final cut because it was considered too gruesome for a family movie?

A. Certain kinds of soldier ants spray acid at their enemies, but if the soldiers are outnumbered, they squeeze themselves so they explode, scattering their acid guts on their enemies.

Q. What kind of insect crawled all over Sigourney Weaver in bed in the movie, *Copycat*?

A. Carpenter ants. Weaver explained how she survived the ordeal: “I cheated. I put two sheets on the bed; one between me and the ants.”