

Pest Gazette



Safety Tips for a Summer of Fun in the Sun

- Coil up hoses so that nobody trips.
- Disconnect any hoses after use or use backflow preventers (available at hardware stores) to prevent puddle water from getting into the house water supply.
- Never use hoses near electrical motors or outlets.
- Never run an extension cord outside unless you are sure that the outlet is protected by a Ground Fault Interrupter. Wet areas may cause a short and the regular circuit breaker may take too long to shut off the power, leading to injury or worse.
- Test your Ground Fault Interrupters to make sure that they work by punching the *test* button. These are sometimes located in the house. After you hit the *test* button, the outlet outside should not work. After testing, punch *reset*.
- Store all lawn care liquids safely away from children.
- Post the **most current** Poison Control phone number on your refrigerator in case children ingest cleaning materials or other household products.
- Never mix bleach and ammonia. The gas that is produced may be deadly.
- When mixing household cleaning materials, never measure with spoons or cups used for food, even if you thoroughly clean the utensils afterwards.
- Always look for an expiration date on cleaning materials and dispose of out-of-date products properly according to instructions on the container.

How to De-Skunk Your Dog

This time of year, skunks are active in many parts of the country. Sometimes dogs will get close enough to skunks to get “sprayed.” This creates a very noxious situation when the dog comes inside. Kansas State University suggests the following home remedy to “de-skunk” a dog:

De-Skunking Solution

- One quart of 3% hydrogen peroxide
- One-fourth cup baking soda (sodium bicarbonate)
- One-teaspoon liquid soap

Wet the animal down, then apply the mixture and work it through the animal’s fur. Leave the solution on three to four minutes and finish with a tap water rinse.

Mix only enough of the solution to use on the dog and discard the rest as it should not be kept and stored.





A fan blowing a gentle breeze over food and eating surfaces will keep flies at bay.

Summer Barbecue

Invite the Girls and Guys, Reduce the Flies

It's a summer weekend and the neighborhood is abuzz with the latest at your backyard barbecue. But, you don't want that party ruined because of the buzz of flies present in summer months. To help reduce flies around your patio:

- Keep all meat products, plates and utensils covered tightly until the food is ready for grilling.
- Keep grill lids down except to flip meat and veggies.
- Remove all sources of standing/stagnant water near your home.
- Tip bird baths of water weekly, fill standing mud puddles, clean drains and gutters, tip potted plant saucers.
- Don't over water your yard; set automatic sprinklers and irrigators back to less frequent watering.
- Remove dog and cat droppings from your yard prior to the party.
- Keep trashcans and recycle bins covered with tight fitting lids and at a distance from your patio.
- A fan blowing a gentle breeze over cooking, prep, and eating surfaces will keep flies at bay.
- Where safety is less of a concern, change light bulbs from white to yellow on your patio. (Most flying insects do not perceive wavelengths of yellow and will not be attracted; this will also reduce the number of spiders present).
- Angle all exterior lights away from the grill and picnic areas.
- Keep screens in good repair.
- Now is the time to give us a call for advice with lingering fly issues.

Enjoy a fly-free picnic this summer with family and friends!





Chipmunks Can be Summer Punks

Summer is a good time to see chipmunks scurrying around as they gather seeds, nuts, berries, and insects to cache away in their burrows. The eastern chipmunk (*Tamias striatus*), is a member of the squirrel family and is common throughout the eastern United States. It is a small, brown ground dwelling squirrel five to six inches long, with two pale and five black longitudinal stripes on its back, and two pale and two brown stripes on each side of the face. The rump is reddish brown; the tail is three to four inches long and hairy. Chipmunks normally weigh two to four ounces and are sometimes confused with the 13-lined ground squirrel. The 13-lined ground squirrel is yellowish, lacks the facial stripes, and the tail is not as bushy as the chipmunk's.

Most people enjoy watching chipmunks, because they are cute little mammals whose antics often make us laugh. They are also a part of the food chain in the wildlife community. Chipmunks prey upon various insects, and chipmunks themselves serve as prey for various predators. Moreover, their food habits influence the growth of various plants.

The Purdue University Web site states that chipmunks can also be very destructive pests when they become numerous around homes and gardens. ***The burrowing activity of chipmunks can cause significant structural damage by undermining foundations, concrete patios, steps, retaining walls, and sidewalks.*** They may also be destructive to gardens when they dig up and eat bulbs and seeds or attack garden fruits.

The burrows of chipmunks are often well-hidden near buildings (such as basements and garages), gardens, stumps, woodpiles or brush piles. The burrow entrance is usually about two inches in diameter. There are no obvious mounds around the burrow entrance because the chipmunk carries the dirt in its

cheek pouches and scatters it on the ground away from the burrow to make the burrow entrance less conspicuous.

Chipmunks are most active during the early morning and late afternoon. Populations of chipmunks average between two and four animals per acre. However, populations as high as 10 chipmunks per acre are possible if sufficient food and cover are available. During the winter months, chipmunks enter a restless hibernation and are relatively inactive. Most chipmunks have emerged from hibernation by early spring.

Chipmunk Control

Wherever possible, chipmunks should be excluded from buildings. Hardware cloth, caulking, or other appropriate materials should be used to close openings where they may gain entry. Trapping and relocation is usually the practical method of eliminating chipmunks in most homeowner situations. Homeowners can also attract fewer chipmunks by keeping birdfeeders and birdseed to a minimum in their yards. For further advice and information on chipmunk management, don't hesitate to give us a call.



The adult larder beetle is about 1/3 inch long. It is dark colored with a broad, pale tan, black-spotted band across the front portion of its wing covers.



Larder beetle larvae

Larder Beetles

Named after the place they are most often found, the larder beetle (*Dermestes lardarius*) can actually be found throughout a house and not just in the larder (an old term for kitchen). The adult larder beetle is a small (1/3 inch long), dark-colored beetle with a broad, pale-tan, black-spotted band across the front portion of the wing covers. This beetle is a member of the carpet beetle family; however, it can feed on a wide variety of materials-not just carpets.

Larder beetle larvae are reddish brown and densely covered with short and long hairs, and have two curved spines on the top of the tail end. Larvae have a strong tendency to remain in dark places. Just before the larvae pupate they begin to migrate, and are often encountered by

homeowners at this time. These older larvae will bore into materials such as wood, cork, or insulation looking for a place to pupate. The adults mate soon after emerging from pupal cases and eggs are laid near a food source.

Both adults and larvae will feed on high protein food sources including cured and spoiled meats, dried fish, high protein pet food, dead insects such as cluster flies and box elder bugs, furs, feathers, leather, cheeses, dead rodents and birds in chimneys or wall partitions, and even rat or mouse control baits.

Larder beetles only attack woolens that have been soiled with blood, fish oils, or other high protein stains. Close relatives of the larder beetle are actually used in cleaning flesh from skeletons used in taxidermy and museums. ■

Larder Beetle Control

Identifying and eliminating the food source is the first step in controlling these pests, according to the University of Wisconsin Web site. Without a food source, larder beetles will not survive. Larder beetles found in and around the kitchen may be infesting stored food. Larvae or adults found in an upstairs room or attic may be infesting a carcass of a dead animal. An infested bag of dog food is easily cleaned up. However, finding the source of one or two beetles may be very difficult. That's where our advice and expertise comes in handy. Knowing why you have the problem will lead to a solution. Consider all the possibilities for food when looking for an in-house infestation site. However, larvae do migrate as they grow and the place they are sighted may be far away from the actual food source! Keep in mind that larvae can easily chew through paper, light plastic, cork, tin, and even foam insulation.