

Bring your pest problems to a HALT!

# The Pest Post



An e-newsletter from Halt Pest Control

Residential  
Multi-Family  
Commercial

**HALT**<sup>®</sup>  
PEST  
CONTROL, INC.  
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## No Pests Means a Cleaner Home

Some years ago a toy manufacturer came out with a line of toys called "Real Pests". Trying to cash in on the popularity of special toy dolls that burped-up liquid, the pest toys spewed actual "goo". Oh great—another mess to clean up! Needless to say, the Real Pests toys were a huge flop, and today you can't find them.

Unlike these toys, the messes actual pests create are really dirty and unsanitary, and it can be far more time consuming and difficult to clean them

up. Pests are not house broken and they leave their droppings everywhere. But droppings are only part of the problem.

**Flies**, for instance, regurgitate (actually throw up) their food, and then lap it up again. When they do this on our food or food counters, they spread germs and leave spots.

**Rodents**, besides leaving their droppings, chew things up and make nests of it, urinate wherever they go, and leave hairs and grease marks.

**Cockroaches** leave behind their egg cases, droppings, and particles of their shed skins. Because they crawl in damp,

dark, dirty places, these pests carry a very unhealthy mix of disease-causing germs with them.

**Fleas** excrete extra dried blood which their larvae feed on.

**Spiders** leave spider webs and egg cases, excreted body fluids, and carcasses of dead insects.

These are just a few examples of the unsanitary messes pests create. By eliminating pests, our regular professional pest management services help make it easier to keep a cleaner home with fewer germs!

## Pests Can Cause Allergies

The Centers for Disease Control report that 9.4% of children and 7.3% of adults have allergies. A wide variety of substances trigger allergic reactions, especially pollen and mold.



than before. Studies by John Hopkins University and other leading research institutions have identified specific proteins (allergens) from cockroaches and mice in indoor living areas. Inner city children, who often do not have regular pest control services, are especially at risk.

Even though cockroaches and mice are the most frequent pest offenders, many other pests also produce allergens. Fleas, mites, caterpillars, and even the new Asian lady beetles, when they invade homes in large numbers, can trigger allergic reactions in susceptible people. Entomologists who work closely with insects have developed allergic reactions to over 100 species of insects.

But recent studies have shown that about 70% of people with allergies are allergic to cockroaches, and for asthmatic children in low-income housing, that number increases to 80%. Clearly, allergic reactions to insects can be a serious problem for people with allergies.

Insect feces, saliva, and cast off skins are the culprits in this. These contain certain proteins that can become airborne and trigger asthma symptoms in susceptible people. These substances accumulate in indoor air because construction methods now create an indoor climate that is far more air-tight

The good news is that a recent study showed that in homes which started with moderate to heavy cockroach infestations, the insect allergen levels fell up to 93% after just six months of cleaning plus regular professional pest control service!



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## Pest Prevention Tip of the Month

Some people buy moth balls or fresh cedar wood and place them in closets, hoping it will either repel or kill fabric pests. Unfortunately, these are useless when used this way. The vapors must be very concentrated before they even repel pests, so it only works in an airtight trunk or sealed box.

## Bed Bug Dispersal

Bed bugs are often unknowingly transported to new locations, but they can also independently crawl off by themselves from room to room and apartment to apartment.



It is believed that they prefer to remain in the same area, close to each other and where they can get a blood meal—unless they become overcrowded or their food source disappears.

An interesting new study in the September, 2009, issue of the *Journal of Medical Entomology* found that female bed bugs, most of which are pregnant, are more likely than males or nymphs to break away from the group. This happens even before the population becomes overcrowded. This is an important finding, because it indicates that bed bug populations produce pregnant female bed bugs that may wander off at any time and start new infestations.

## New World Record

What is the longest insect in the world? A newly discovered stick bug found on the island of Borneo has broken all previous records. Its body measures an amazing 14 inches long! If you stretch out and include its long stick-like legs, the new insect actually measures an incredible 22 inches long. Stick bugs camouflage themselves by looking remarkably similar to a twig or branch. They even sway in the wind like a stick to fool predators.



## Your Questions Answered

Q. How many flies would it take to cover the earth?

A. You may have heard that flies could quickly cover the earth under the right conditions—if they had access to abundant food, perfect conditions, and no predators.

A man named Hodge first calculated that if a female housefly started laying eggs in April, she and her descendants would yield a staggering 191,010,000,000,000,000 flies by August—just five months later. Hodge stated, “Allowing 1/8th of a cubic inch per fly, this number would cover the earth 47 feet deep.” This incredible and now famous figure has been quoted thousands of times in books, the media, and the internet.

But Hodge apparently was way off in some of his figuring. According to Oldroyd, who did very precise recalculations published in 1964, this number of flies actually would cover only an area the size of Germany 47 feet deep, or the entire earth 2½ feet deep.

Here’s the interesting thing. Almost no one has ever heard of Oldroyd’s figures, partly because it’s not nearly as memorable or mind-boggling as the entire earth being covered by 47 feet of flies. But everyone agrees on one thing: flies, and most other insects, have a prolific and disturbing ability to reproduce. They are so well adapted to living around us that, if left alone, they cause serious problems.



## Giant Pythons Invade Florida

Ill tempered African rock pythons have been discovered in the wild, west of Miami.

These snakes, which can reach 20 feet in length and are one of the world’s largest snakes, were probably released by pet breeders. They may have already reached the Everglades, where they can multiply. This snake is so vicious that it occasionally attacks humans in its native Africa. It is a constrictor, so it kills by encircling and literally squeezing the life out of its victim.

Similar-sized Burmese pythons have already escaped into the Everglades, and are becoming a serious problem for wildlife. They have even been seen attacking alligators.

The two snake species are closely related, and if they mate, they could produce a hybrid species—which has happened in captivity. The hybrids are a sort of “supersnake” that are even hardier, and more powerful and dangerous predators, than either snake.



## Vampire Bat Bites Increasing

Vampire bats in Peru are increasingly biting people. These bats bite their victim and lap up the blood from the bite. Large colonies of the bats have developed where there are cattle, which is a preferred food source for the bats. People are seldom bitten in areas where cattle are raised, but where there are no cattle, vampire bats have been biting people.



A vampire bat feeds once per night, taking one or two tablespoons of blood from its victim. The bites and loss of blood generally do not harm the victim, but increasingly these bats are infected with rabies, and outbreaks of this deadly disease are becoming more common.

Fortunately, we don’t have vampire bats in the United States. Our bats are all beneficial, feeding mostly on insects.