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SLOW DOWN THE FALL MIGRATION

Every fall there is a plethora of mother nature's creatures just searching for a warm place to come inside and visit you. Cracks, crevices, open garage doors, vents, nooks and crannies all allow these fall visitors in. The guest list may include crickets, mice, multicolored Asian lady beetles, cockroaches, Indian meal moths, and wasps are among the most troublesome. Spiders, box elder bugs, millipedes (wireworms), pill bugs, centipedes, elm leaf beetles, clover mites, ants, red flour beetles, ladybugs, fruit flies and house flies are more benign. Plan now to go to war against these fall home invaders!

Start outside the home. There are numerous insecticide materials packaged at home and garden centers for application around the home along the foundation. Many of those are pre-packaged with application equipment attached making them easy to use. Applications made during the summer months, including a fall application and emergency treatment when the thundering herd is at a peak towards your home, helps a good deal. Control is usually quite good for ants, spiders, crickets, millipedes, etc. One example of a new chemistry compared to the older organophosphates is called Tempo. Tempo is an example of an insecticide used as a foundation and boundary treatment. (Mention of a trade name is not a blanket endorsement but rather an example to indicate changes over time). Always read and follow the label directions very carefully when using insecticides.

When insect guests arrive inside, I recommend a vacuum followed by removal of the contents outside or in a sealed plastic trash bag. If you are careful, nylon hose with a rubber band on the vacuum hose and your hand holding the nylon tightly, will catch the little buggers in the nylon without having to change out vacuum bags. Swatting leaves a stain with flies which can be cleaned up. Swatting beasts like multicolored lady beetles or clover mites leaves a stain.

Personally, I just don't get excited about living with insecticide odors in the home. If they are absolutely necessary, use them sparingly as spot treatments, read and follow label instructions carefully and clean treated areas a few days after the application. Take special care to avoid human food or pet food storage or preparation areas.

Pantry pest-like red flour beetles and the Indian meal moth take a special effort in cleaning and proper storage of food and pet products. Red flour beetles will usually disappear quickly with a cleanup of food storage and preparation areas. Indian meal moths are likely to be a greater challenge. Seal spices, flour, cornmeal, pancake mix, etc in sealed containers in the freezer. Store popcorn in canning jars with the canning lid and ring, they can get by simply screw lids. Make sure storage time for all pasta products, cake mixes and cereals is at a minimum. In severe cases, these will need to be in sealed Tupperware® or like storage containers. In old homes with lots of wallpapered areas, it may be nearly impossible to get rid of the last meal moth as they feed on the wallpaper paste in any corner of loose edge.

War is the only way to deal with mice. Make a list of all the ways you can deter, kill, abolish, attack, maim or otherwise rid your home or office of mice and get enough ammunition to finish



the war. UNL specialists indicate we need to tighten up buildings now covering all holes one-fourth inch or larger. A common mistake is the failure to use enough traps. For mice, more traps are better. Think two dozen traps for a single family ranch style house. More for larger houses and areas. Peanut butter works well in traps. Remember, you don't go to war with one little pistol in your hand! Don't bother with those silly ultrasonic devices, house cats or repellents. They don't work.

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