

# Home Grounds Fact Sheet

## Control of Household Pests

*Shaded box = actual size*

### Insect Pests Attracted by Food

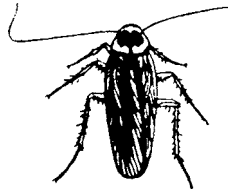
**ANTS**...see Home Grounds Fact Sheet B-2-14

Ants are beneficial because they help clean up the environment. They feed on a variety of substances including dead insects and other animal matter, sweets, starches and fats. Ants enter houses in search of food, but leave if none is present. Caulking and other home repair helps keep ants out. Locate and eliminate nesting sites. If needed, spot treat foraging trails and nests. Boiling water poured on shallow nests may be effective. **(see note A at the end of this fact sheet.)**



**COCKROACHES**...see Home Grounds Fact Sheet B-2-13A

Roaches hide during the day in sheltered, dark places and come out to forage at night. When disturbed, they run rapidly for hiding places. Pyrethrum aerosols are often used as a flushing agent to see if roaches are present.

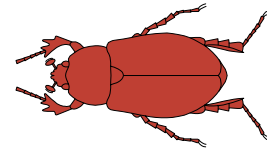


Improper sanitary practices encourage the roach population; repair plumbing, dry out moist places, keep refrigerator defrost pan clean and dry kitchen cloths carefully and cover or refrigerate all food. Clean up thoroughly after handling food. In apartments it may be helpful to place window screening over heating ducts, gratings and other places where roaches enter. Moderately effective sticky traps are available; place them in corners and in areas where you've seen roaches. Seal all unnecessary cracks and crevices to reduce harborage areas. Baits and insect growth regulators (IGRs) are becoming more prevalent for cockroach control. Hydroprene, an IGR, may be included in some preparations. Boric acid (bait or dust) is the least toxic option. It works slowly on cockroaches. Applying dust during initial construction of buildings has proven effective. In apartment buildings, the entire structure should be treated by trained specialists. **(see note A at the end of this fact sheet.)** Apply beneath kitchen sink, in bathrooms and other warm and moist places. Repeat when small cockroaches appear.

**FLOUR AND GRAIN BEETLES**...

see Home Grounds Fact Sheet B-2-13

These pests are usually discovered when an infested package is opened or when small brown beetles are discovered in the kitchen near containers of stored grain products, pet food or birdseed. Discard infested food and clean shelves and cupboards thoroughly. Remove food and dishes, vacuum and scrub storage areas. Store products in tightly sealed containers and inspect regularly. Keep fresh supplies in tightly closed jars or cans. Keep birdseed and pet food in tightly closed containers.

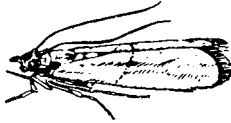


**B-2-19 JES:re revised RT 10/00**

## FLOUR AND GRAIN MOTHS...

see Home Grounds Fact Sheet B-2-13

Larvae feed in flour and grain products, dried fruits, nuts and dried pet and fish food. When mature, they may crawl up walls to the ceiling to pupate. Destroy infested food. Clean shelves and cupboards thoroughly, removing food and dishes. Remember to clean upper corners as well. If larvae have climbed walls, carefully clean area where walls and ceiling meet. Keep fresh supplies in tightly closed jars or cans. Keep birdseed and pet foods in closed containers. Be alert for flying moths.



## HOUSEFLIES

Houseflies are summertime pests that breed in manure, garbage and fermenting crop wastes. They are dangerous because they may carry and spread disease germs that are in the material where they breed, feed or walk. Use screens and keep food covered; dispose of garbage frequently. Spread piles of grass clippings or other rich decaying organic matter to dry. Clean up pet dung in yard (a breeding site). Try not to use doors that are downwind of food odors where flies have accumulated. A fly swatter is very effective. Sticky fly paper is useful in some situations.

**(see note A at the end of this fact sheet.)**



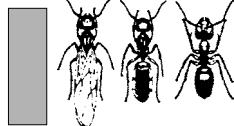
## Insects Attacking Fabrics, Furniture and Structures

### CARPENTER ANTS...

see Home Grounds Fact Sheet B-2-22

New infestations are nearly always associated with wet or moist wood, but infestation may continue after wood is dried. Ants excavate galleries for nesting in wood. Coarse sawdust is sometimes seen near nest site. Severe structural damage may occur. Eliminate causes of wet wood. Chemicals are only temporary relief—if moisture problems continue, the ants return. The ultimate goal is to destroy the queen.

**(see note A at the end of this fact sheet.)**



### CARPET BEETLES...

see Home Grounds Fact Sheet B-2-9

These black or variegated beetles are often first observed on window sills in spring. Larvae are covered with golden brown hair and infest wool, hair, feathers and dead insects. Vacuum wool lint and pet hair from between floor boards and remove accumulations of dead insects from attic areas. Store only clean woolens. Dry cleaning kills carpet beetles. Protect uninfested goods by storing in tight containers. **(see note A at the end of this fact sheet.)**



### CARPENTER BEES...

see Home Grounds Fact Sheet B-2-4

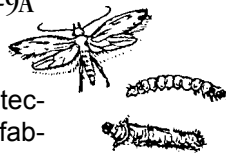
These bees are structural pests, boring holes for nesting in face boards of porches, windows and door frames. Like other bees, carpenter bees are pollinators and are considered beneficial. Once nesting sites are established, the bees tend to return to the site year after year. Painted or well-finished surfaces are less likely to be chosen. Rough-cut untreated wood surfaces are preferred. Screen bees from nesting sites, especially in spring and early summer. Fill holes with putty and repaint as needed. If necessary, use commercial wasp and hornet spray to kill bees and spray in nest openings.



### CLOTHES MOTHS...

see Home Grounds Fact Sheet B-2-9A

Larvae feed on fabric containing wool or other animal fibers. Silken feeding tubes or hard protective cases are often found on fabrics. Brush infested articles and air them out-doors in a sunny location and/or dry-clean them. Vacuum wool lint from between floor boards. Protect uninfested goods by placing in tightly sealed containers. Cedar-lined chests and closets are effective in repelling moths but should be lightly sanded to release oils after a year or two. **(see note A at the end of this fact sheet.)**



### CRICKETS...

see Home Grounds Fact Sheet B-2-5

Crickets usually enter dwellings in late summer when vegetation becomes scarce or after crops have been harvested. A few species are commonly found in basements. Remove accumulations of moist debris from basement and ground floor entrances and windows. Be sure doors fit well and are kept closed during autumn months. Keep storage areas clean and dry. Sticky roach traps may help catch crickets. **(see note A at the end of this fact sheet.)** Apply in areas where crickets may hide. Treat areas around basement doors and windows where crickets enter.



### POWDER-POST BEETLES...

see Home Grounds Fact Sheet B-2-6

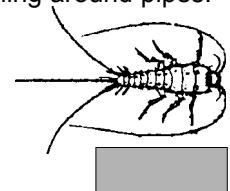
Powder or very fine sawdust on or beneath wood and small round or oval shot holes in wood surfaces indicate infestation. Well finished (painted or otherwise finished) dry wood is seldom attacked. Keep wood dry; keep moisture and humidity levels low wherever possible. Reinfestation rarely occurs in dry, seasoned wood. Repaint or refinish surfaces as necessary.

### SILVERFISH AND FIREBRATS...

see Home Grounds Fact Sheet B-2-15

Silverfish and firebrats are shiny, silver grey or mottled grey insects with 3 long tail-like structures on the hind end. Silverfish prefer moisture whereas firebrats prefer warm, dry areas (like the furnace room in apartments). They are active at night and hide during the day. They eat foods and other materials high in protein or starch (glue or paste, bookbindings, starch in clothing and rayon fabrics). Remove residues of high-protein foods. Valued books, papers or clothing may need to be stored in dry areas or in sealed plastic bags. Seal cracks and crevices. Special types of caulking are available for sealing around pipes.

**(see note A at the end of this fact sheet.)**

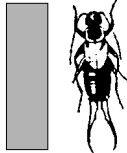


### EARWIGS...

see Home Grounds Fact Sheet B-2-5

Earwig's most distinctive feature is the pair of forceps on the tip of the abdomen. Earwigs generally feed as scavengers on dead insects and rotting plant material. Keep entrance areas dry and clear of decaying vegetation; keep storage areas clear of damp newspapers or carpets. Repair damaged window screens and doors. Inspect home-grown vegetables or flowers before bringing into kitchen. Vacuum or sweep up insects and dispose of outdoors.

**(see note A at the end of this fact sheet.)**



**Termites.....see leaflet B-2-18 for control of this complex problem.**

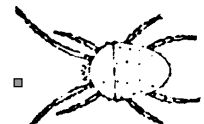
## Annoying Insects and Disease Vectors

### BIRD MITES...

Bird mites enter the home from bird nests in attics, on window sills, air conditioners and eaves by creeping or being blown through ventilators, windows or other openings. Screen birds from common nesting areas on buildings. Remove nests. Clean infested surfaces with warm, soapy water to remove the mites. Wash bedding in hot water with detergent or dry in hot clothes dryer for 20 minutes to kill mites.

### CLOVER MITES...

Clover mites are eight-legged, reddish or brownish creatures that are smaller than a pinhead. In late fall, mites seeking protected overwintering sites (under shingles or siding) may enter homes from nearby vegetation by the thousands. Some may enter when activity begins in spring, also. If crushed, they leave a red stain, especially noticeable on white surfaces. Caulk or weather-strip openings where mites enter; keep windows closed tightly during fall migration. Clean areas where mites accumulate with warm soapy water or a vacuum cleaner (remember to empty bag after use). **(see note A at the end of this fact sheet.)**



## FLEAS...

see Home Grounds Fact Sheet B-2-25

Fleas are small, jumping brown insects that bite humans and animals. They are usually noticed when a pet is removed from the home for a period of time. Flea larvae feed on detritus, shed skin, hair from animals and feces of adult fleas. Check pet bedding often in warm weather; populations are often concentrated where pets sleep. Limit area used as bedding. Thoroughly clean hair, bits of food and debris from animals' sleeping quarters. Thoroughly clean or discard animal bedding and treat animal with a flea-control formulation. For questions about flea control on pets, check with your veterinarian. Vacuuming daily can help control fleas. The IGR methoprene or hydroxyprone are also available in some flea-control formulations. It prevents larval fleas from maturing to the adult stage.

**(see note A at the end of this fact sheet.)**

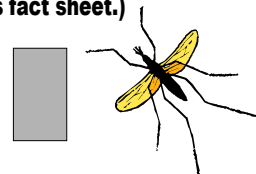


## MOSQUITOS...

Mosquitos are biting insects that suck blood from people and animals. Larvae are aquatic. Keep doors and windows tightly screened and closed to prevent entry into the home. Drain tin cans, old tires and other water containers to reduce breeding sites.

**(see note A at the end of this fact sheet.)**

Community control may be necessary. Nassau County Mosquito Control Agency (516) 571-8700.



## FUNGUS GNATS...

see Home Grounds Fact Sheet B-2-8

Fungus gnats are often seen in the home around flower pots. Larvae feed on decaying organic matter. Where houseplants are the source, remove and discard growing media and repot in a sterile one. Clean up any spills of organic matter in the house. If needed, use fly paper to control flying adults or pyrethrum or tetrathrum



## SOWBUGS AND PILLBUGS...

see Home Grounds Fact Sheet B-2-12

Sowbugs and pillbugs are fat, dark-grey, hard-shelled arthropods that are usually found in moist areas around the home but occasionally enter basements, garages, etc. Pillbugs roll into a ball when disturbed. Repair cracks in foundation and caulk around basement windows and other entryways. Keep ground-level entrance areas free of rotting leaves and debris; trim shrubs or other plantings to promote air circulation and drying.

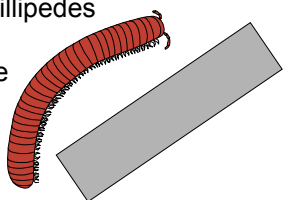
**(see note A at the end of this fact sheet.)**



## MILLIPEDES...

see Home Grounds Fact Sheet B-2-12

Millipedes are elongated, segmented, worm-like creatures with 2 pairs of legs per body segment. They are usually found in moist areas of the home such as basements, near patio doors or in garages. Sweep up and dispose of outdoors. They generally feed outdoors on decaying vegetable matter. **(see note A at the end of this fact sheet.)** In very moist years, large numbers of millipedes may move near foundations to escape excessive soil moisture and control may be difficult.

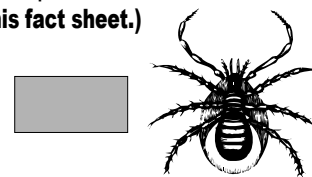


## SPIDERS...

see Home Grounds Fact Sheet B-2-15

Spiders are beneficial insects. Every effort should be made not to destroy them in the garden. Keep spiders out with proper screening and weather stripping. Remove indoor webs and spiders with a broom; discard outdoors (this may take some time, but eventually spiders will be controlled). Control insects on which spiders feed.

**(see note A at the end of this fact sheet.)**

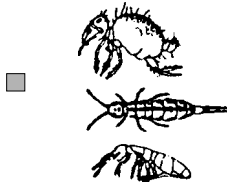


### SPRINGTAILS...

see Home Grounds Fact Sheet B-2-8

Minute insects, abundant in most soils, springtails have a forked appendage on the abdomen that enables them to jump. They feed on algae, fungi and decayed vegetable matter. They are occasionally found in damp places such as kitchens, basements, bathrooms, around drains and in soil of potted plants. Keep areas dry where possible; correct moisture problems. Repot house-plants in sterile soil.

(see note A at the end of this fact sheet.)



### WASPS AND HORNETS...

see Home Grounds Fact Sheet B-2-1 and B-2-4B

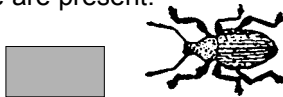
These are stinging insects that often build their nests near occupied dwellings and may become a nuisance or danger to those allergic to their sting. They are social insects—many individuals live in the same nest. Check periodically around the outside of the house during early summer to spot and treat small nests. By August and September wasp populations are at their highest and individual insects sometimes enter houses accidentally. Use screens in buildings and screen ventilators in attics. If 1 or 2 enter, a fly swatter can be used to control them. If larger numbers enter, a commercially available wasp and hornet spray or any spray for flying insects indoors can be used. Be careful—insects indoors may be irritated and can sting.



### TAXUS (black vine) WEEVIL...

see Home Grounds Fact Sheet E-1-36

Taxus weevils are plant-feeding insects that occasionally invade buildings, becoming nuisances. They do not cause damage indoors. Block entry routes with caulking material. If necessary, treat infested plantings outdoors before hibernation. Pitfall traps or beating sheets can help monitor adult activity. Entomophagus nematodes may be used outdoors for soil dwelling stage (larvae) when larvae are present.



**note A. Chemical pesticides are available. If you choose to use chemical pesticides, contact your local Cooperative Extension office for specific recommendations.**

"This publication contains pesticide recommendations. Changes in pesticide regulations occur constantly and human errors are still possible. Some materials mentioned may no longer be available, and some uses may no longer be legal. All pesticides distributed, sold or applied in New York State must be registered with the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC). Questions concerning the legality and/or registration status for pesticide use in New York State should be directed to the appropriate Cornell Cooperative Extension specialist or your regional DEC office (631) 444-0340. Read the label before applying any pesticide. Cornell Cooperative Extension and its employees assume no liability for the effectiveness or results of any chemicals for pesticide usage. No endorsement of products is made or implied."