

COMMAND PEST CONTROL

(1)

Monthly pest diary

January
Rats and mice (<i>Rodentia</i>)
This is a bad time for rats especially when it is cold and frosty - their numbers reduce dramatically in prolonged spells of cold. Therefore they tend to try to enter buildings looking for warmth and can be seen close to properties, sometimes heard in roof voids and cavity walls. Sightings are reported as they try to scavenge for a living. Mice will also seek shelter and will survive on poor diets inside properties.
Moles (<i>Talpa europaea</i>)
Moles start to be active at this time of the year and mole hills start to appear
Rabbits (<i>Oryctolagus cuniculus</i>)
Rabbits like cold frosty weather and their activity starts this month

February
Rats and mice (<i>Rodentia</i>)
Without water rats cannot survive and frozen puddles make problems worse for them. Both species are reported in numbers in February. Rats will gnaw pipes and occasionally fall into water tanks in roofs trying to take a drink. Mice take moisture from their food in general. Mice are sporadic feeders making control difficult.
Moles (<i>Talpa europaea</i>)
Moles are active and although it is cold they create hills and surface runs
Rabbits (<i>Oryctolagus cuniculus</i>)
Rabbits like cold frosty weather and their activity continues during February

March
Cluster flies (<i>Pollenia rudis</i>)
Cluster flies start emerging from their winter hibernation often because tiles and roof spaces are warmed by the sun. They have been hiding under tiles and felt in sash boxes around windows. They prefer south and south west sides of properties.
Garden or black ants (<i>Lasius niger</i>)
These ants start to appear in March and will build nests under paving slabs and around buildings in cracks in pathways. They exploit sandy soil which is often a medium used as a foundation under paths. Indoors they forage looking for sweet materials.
Feral Pigeons (<i>Columba livia</i>)
These birds start to breed in March and are often seen congregating in large numbers. Their fouling is threat to human health as it can often contain pathogens some of which are dangerous to man. Their excrement blocks water courses leading to overflowing guttering and downpipes, this can lead to the need for redecoration. They also carry parasites and this material attract flies etc.

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(2)

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April
Squirrels (<i>Sciurus carolinensis</i>)
Squirrels give the impression of pretty fluffy animal however they prey on eggs and young nestling birds; they cause extensive damage to trees and can cause considerable damage to the structure of roof spaces including electric cables. They will nest in attics and their noise often disturbs occupants in properties.
Moles (<i>Talpa europaea</i>)
Moles start to breed creating rutting runs close to the surface

May
Varied Carpet beetle (<i>Anthrenus verbasci</i>)
This small beetle starts being reported on window sills and ledges; it flies and is attracted to natural UV light. It can also enter buildings via open windows. The larvae are known as woolly bears and create much damage to wool based carpets and clothes. It will also consume feathers and fur being able to digest keratin.
Wasps (<i>Vespula species</i>)
This is when Queen wasps start to be reported and they are constructing nests often up to the size of a golf or tennis ball
Moles (<i>Talpa europaea</i>)
Moles are continuing to breed creating rutting runs close to the surface

June
Clothes & House moths
There are two species of clothes moths and two house moths which start breeding this time of year. Their larvae create much damage often attacking wool carpets and furnishings; the first damage is not seen until furniture is moved. Carpets are sometimes discovered being threadbare. Case bearing clothes moth larvae live in a small cocoon like home which is made from fibres they feed on. They retire into this case if disturbed.
Flies - House fly (<i>Musca domestica</i>)
Lesser house fly (<i>Fannia canicularis</i>), Bluebottles (<i>Lucilia sp</i>)
Many species appear in June and breeding is rapid when the weather is warm preceded by damp weather. House flies breed in dustbins, skips and where dirty conditions prevail such as in filth accumulations. Lesser house flies live in poultry and animal houses in litter and bluebottles live in and are attracted to dead meat and material of organic origin.
Flying ants (<i>Lasius niger</i>)
Queens and drones leave nests to mate with ants from other nests during warm days

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(3)

July
Wasps (<i>Vespula</i> species)
There are two principle species of wasps the Common and German wasp which are common this month. They feed on grubs caterpillars and insects and are not normally a major nuisance at this time. There is a larger species which is spreading north called the Median or European wasp. This latter species often nests in trees and bushes and can be aggressive
Flies - House fly (<i>Musca domestica</i>) Lesser house fly (<i>Fannia canicularius</i>), Bluebottles (<i>Lucilia</i> sp) and others
At the peak of the summer flies can be a serious nuisance entering businesses and homes contaminating food contact & preparation surfaces. They also breed in refuse & will exploit poor hygiene but can be found in clean premises entering via defects in the fabric of buildings and via open doors & windows etc. Backed-up and blocked drains and even foul water in plant pots can be the source of some species.
Flying ants (<i>Lasius niger</i>)
Queens and drones leave nests to mate with ants from other nests during warm days

August
Saw toothed grain beetles (<i>Oryzaephilus surinamensis</i>)
These very small beetles live in broken and whole grains and are a serious pest in grain stores and stored product raw materials. They can heat up grain as they breed in very large numbers and will damage and render products unacceptable.
Biscuit beetles (<i>Stegobium paniceum</i>)
These small brown beetles often infest dog biscuits, cereals and baked products along with herbs and spices. They are more foreign body hazard and are not a major pest of economic importance like the grain weevil. Commodities have to be quarantined and possibly disposed of once infestation has been found.
Flour beetles (<i>Tribolium</i> species)
These are very common and a serious foreign body pest in flour and many cereal based products. Commodities have to be quarantined and possibly disposed of once infestation has been found. Machine and bin / silo cleaning may have to be carried out and the source identified including suppliers.
Mediterranean flour moth (<i>Ephestia kuehniella</i>)
These are very common and a serious foreign body pest in flour and many cereal based products. The larvae produce silk which helps hide them from predators and in quantity can clog machinery. They are seen as an indicator of poor stock rotation and may indicate a lack of effective cleaning in some situations. Commodities have to be quarantined and possibly disposed of once infestation has been found. Machine and bin / silo cleaning may have to be carried out and the source identified including suppliers. The adult moth is tolerant of cold weather and they overwinter as pupae or larvae in silken cocoons.

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(4)

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August

Indian meal moth (*Plodia interpunctella*)

This is one of the most common pests in stored products and it readily targets commodities such as walnuts, brazil nuts, almonds dried apricots and other dried fruit. The larvae spin silk and the moth can become a serious nuisance in health and whole-food products. They can cause significant losses and stock has to be quarantined and in some cases disposed of – the source of supply needs investigating.

Grain weevil (*Sitophilus granarius*)

These insects have a distinctive snout or rostrum and unlike the saw toothed grain beetle live as larvae within the grains. Once pupation has taken place the adult beetle hatches out boring a hole to exit the grain leaving a spent husk. Commercially they can be expensive for cereal farmers and for those storing products in bulk. Seasonal grain store cleaning and treatment is therefore recommended.

Wasps (*Vespula species*)

At this time of the year wasps are frenzied sugar feeders and will enter buildings looking for anything sweet or syrupy. Their nests have reached full size and the old Queen is producing new unfertilised Queens and drones in the nest. These will take over as next seasons Queens and will start building a nest next April from scratch.

Hornets (*Vespa crabo*)

Hornets are like giant wasp but although fearsome looking live in much smaller colonies often near orchards or in nests in outbuildings. They can easily be confused with the smaller Median wasp.

Flies (*Diptera species*)

A number of fly species are still active during the last few weeks of the summer and they can be a serious threat to health and a foreign body contaminant in food materials.

September

Cluster flies (*Pollenia rudis*)

Cluster flies start entering buildings at this time under tiles and roof felt congregating in large numbers. They enter sash boxes and are seen around windows bothering occupants. When seen in large numbers they often disturb property owners

Wasps (*Vespula species*)

The old Queen is coming to the end of her life and although wasps are seen in October and November the first frosts can kill off the colony at the end of this month and many are now feeding on fruit trees.

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(5)

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October
Fleas (<i>Siphonaptera</i>)
The most common species reported is the cat flea which readily bites humans. They may become more prominent when heating is tuned on as the days are getting colder. Pets bedding may be one source.

November
Spiders (<i>Arachnids</i>)
These are not insects but start to become a major problem in some houses and establishments during this month.
Mosquitoes (<i>Culicines, Aedes</i>)
These insects become a pest sometimes entering windows and doors and it is only the female that feeds on blood.
Moles (<i>Talpa europaea</i>)
Moles are active at this time of the year and mole hills start to appear
Rabbits (<i>Oryctolagus cuniculus</i>)
Rabbits like cold frosty weather and they can be active this month

December
Rats and mice (<i>Rodentia</i>)
This is another month when rats and mice try to shelter from the cold and look for food. They are often sighted in and around properties, sometimes they are heard in roof voids and cavity walls, some mistake the noise as bird activity. Mice will also enter properties and squeeze under doors with a gap as small as 6-7mm.
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