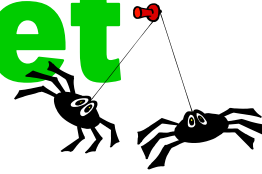


The Spinneret

Quarterly publication of **BEACON Pest Control** ©

All Rights Reserved.

Spring 2007



WELCOME, to the first edition of **The Spinneret**. This quarterly publication is filled with seasonal information designed to help you maintain your home and inform you of pest issues to be aware of. Some parts are educational, some are hopefully entertaining and some are just to help you keep tabs on what we are doing here at BEACON.

Please feel free to tell us what you think. If you have an issue you would like us to focus on please let me know. -Ed Mitchell, President.

Critter Chronicles:

Raccoon. The name comes from the Algonquin word *arakun* meaning "one who scratches with hands".

Despite much research, there is little knowledge about a raccoon's lifespan in the wild. Captive animals have survived up to 14 years but it is believed they only live about 7 years in the wild.

Raccoons, who mate during mid-winter, are busy looking for places to build dens for their kits this time of year. It is not unusual for females to dig under decks or tear the screens off foundation vents in the search for a secluded place. If a raccoon does get into the crawlspace it will pull insulation out of the sub-floor to line its den. This damage can be so severe that the sub-floor insulation may need to be completely replaced.

Raccoon gestation lasts only about 63 days and typically produces between 3-4 kits. Kits will be weaned around 8 weeks but may stay with the mother until she becomes pregnant the following winter.

Raccoons can be friendly but like any wildlife it is best to leave it wild. Feeding these animals can lead to serious problems.

In the wild raccoons "forage". They usually consume insects, earthworms and other small animals. When people feed them it interrupts this activity and doesn't provide them with the range of foods they need.

It causes them to congregate in larger numbers than they would normally.

This increases the spread of diseases such as distemper and parasites. Some of these can be transmitted to us with little difficulty.

Continued...



The Honey Do List...

Having survived the Big Blow, and the Big Freeze it is time to turn our sights on the coming Big Rain.

Many gutters and downspouts have become clogged with debris and are in dire need of cleaning. The temptation is to wait till summer when the weather warms but by then water may already be damaging your home.

A little effort now will save a lot of heart burn later.

So get cracken!



Evolution:

I started doing pest control in Baltimore in 1982. In those days there were no requirements for tracking pesticide use, few credentials needed to stay certified and almost no requirement for liability insurance. Pest control was just beginning to become a professional, regulated industry.

Back then all the products smelled horrible, the roaches were resistant and the service charges averaged \$75 for three months coverage.

Today, every application made to a home is tracked for seven years, technicians receive a minimum of 20 hours training a year and the minimum liability insurance required is \$200,000 per occurrence.

Today's products are almost odorless, new techniques have caught up to roach resistance, and service charges still only average \$80 for three months coverage.

With all those changes plus the increased costs of fuel, labor, equipment and just about everything else you have to ask, how it is that the price hasn't skyrocketed?

Continued..

Raccoons from page 1

The best way to stay on good terms with raccoons is to treat them with respect.

Don't feed them. Even if they stand on their hind legs and say "please". If you do they will eventually become a problem for someone. Roofs, foundation vents, window screens and insulation are just a few of the things they can damage.

Don't free feed your pets outside. Put down only enough for your animal to eat in one setting, then pick it up until the next feeding. Raccoons love pet food but it has too much protein in it for them to stay healthy.

Don't give them easy access to your home. Trees should be kept at least 5 feet away from the roof. Keep the entry to the crawlspace and foundation vents in good repair.

If raccoons do get under a deck or into the crawlspace it is possible to repel them with light and sound (a drop light and a cheap radio work well).

If raccoons raid your garden, low voltage electric fencing is an effective deterrent.

This advice will help with most raccoon encounters but if you need additional assistance please give us a call. ■

Creepy Crawlies:

They have been sleeping all winter. As spring warms the soil we brace for the marauding hoards.

Most ants are beneficial but there are a few species that like to raid our homes, most conspicuous are the odorous house ants.

This tiny ant is notorious for getting into sweets and will often be found hanging around on counter tops looking for fruit juice or coffee rings.

Many people think housekeeping is the problem, but that is only half right. While clean counters are important it is often conditions around the outside of your home that attract them in the first place.

This ant will nest under almost anything setting on the soil so it is important to store things properly.

Lumber, firewood, lawn furniture, spare tires even your favorite rock collection should never be stored against the foundation or under decks. Even plastic sheeting placed under landscape materials is attractive to them and should be avoided.

If you avoid making these mistakes and still get them in your home there are two things to remember.

1. Never treat ants with over the counter products. Odorous House ants have many queens in each colony and repellent sprays can fragment the nest and spread it around.
2. Call immediately for service. Specialty tools are available that allow us to deal with these ants quickly and effectively. ■

Evolution from page 1

The answer is, efficiency. A well trained technician can provide a *maintenance* service on the average home in 8 to 15 minutes, sometimes less depending on the application. This is only possible because of advances in treatment tools, products and training.

Today's technicians have to produce on average \$100 per hour, 40 hours per week, rain or shine in order to earn 25-30 thousand dollars a year. Days that they can't work have to be made up for in efficiency on the jobsite.

There lies the heart of the matter. When determining the value of the pest control services, performance is the only true measure, not how long it takes. ■

Wacky facts:

- Night butterflies have ears in their wings to help them avoid bats.
- The earliest fossil cockroach is about 280 million years old, preceding dinosaurs by 80 million years.
- Of all the insects in the world only about 1% are harmful to humans. The rest are harmless or beneficial.
- Between the time a monarch butterfly caterpillar leaves its egg and enters its chrysalis it will shed its skin 4 times and increase in size over 2700 times.

Service Targets:

Currently applications are focused on ants and sow bugs. Ground level applications of granules are the principal preventive application being made at this time.

These granules require water to be activated and provide better protection than sprays under wet conditions.

We do guaranty the performance of our services.

If you have problems or questions regarding your service please call promptly.