



Spiders, Flies and Bats, Oh My!

This is a particularly “buggy” issue! The reason for that is we are having a particularly buggy year. The “winter that wasn’t” would be the main suspect behind this phenomenon.

We have been encountering lots of little nasties so far this year. On the other hand, I have also noticed an increase in the “good” bugs that prey on the “bad” ones. Lots of assassin bugs, dragonflies, hover flies, robber flies, ladybugs and green lacewings. Lady bug and lacewing larvae are some of the most ferocious predators in the country! Let us not forget the paper wasps and hornets. I know they can be a bit aggressive when bothered, but one of their favorite prey are caterpillars, which love to eat the plants *we grow to eat!*

So, without further delay, I will convey a few stories sure to inform, horrify and otherwise creep you out! (Mainly the ladies, if you are like my wife. The guys will probably just get a chuckle out of it.)

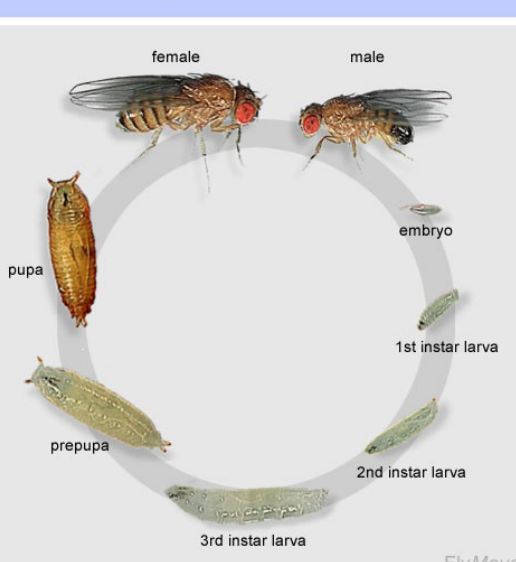
Fruit Fly Elucidation

Even if you keep house like June Cleaver, you’re bound to have a run-in with these pesky little buggers! It doesn’t matter how tightly your house is sealed or how fastidious you are about cleaning. Truth is they, more often than not, are brought in on (*or in*) fruits of various types. Bananas are especially problematic. And, no, the *flies* are not in the fruit, but their eggs or larvae are! Mmmm-mmmm! (My G’ma always said a little extra protein never hurt anyone.)

If they are around your sink drains then they may not be fruit flies at all but drain flies or gnats. If your eyes are still good, or your spectacles are nearby, you can see the colorful eyes of the fruit fly. All of the aforementioned flies can, and will, breed in drains and garbage disposals. There are several good traps anyone can easily make to catch fruit flies. You can find them by clicking the fly below. While you are on that site, click on the discussions tab for some comedic relief. People can be quite humorous.



The life cycle of *Drosophila melanogaster*



Customer Relations!

In another life, Patti and I had an antique shop west of Atlanta. We had leased an old building that was previously some sort of car dealership. I grew up in an antique shop so it was an inevitable evolution. The building was in rough shape when we leased it so we made a solid attempt to dress the place up a bit while retaining some “old building charm” to go with the aged collectibles placed therein.

One of the challenges we faced was a resident bat colony. The landlord did some repairs on the roof and left an opening for the bats’ nocturnal escapades. Once they were out, I sealed up the opening so they could find somewhere else to poop. Despite our best efforts, a few managed to find their way back in. I sealed up the offending breach and attempted a capture and release strategy. While mostly successful, there were a few knuckleheads that managed to evade my gentle persuasions. There was a drop ceiling in place that the bats resided above. Their favorite hangout was in the front corner of the store front.

One particularly slow day I had removed a couple of the ceiling tiles and was trying to extricate the remaining few when a customer walks up to the front door. “Some one is coming in!”, came the warning from Patti. Quickly I walked away from the corner, trying to retain some façade of mercantile professionalism as the door swung inward.

After an obligatory salutation, we implored her to have a look around. The first thing on my mind was “Damn, it would have to be a lady.” No offense ladies, but most of you have a different vision of interaction with bats than most males do, in my experience anyway. Patti and I exchange glances at each other and nervously eye the dark opening in the corner where the flying rats resided. About that time, a bat drops out of the ceiling and starts flying around! I quickly walk towards the customer and ask if there is a particular item she is searching for. We strike up a small conversation as I watch the bat flit around behind her head. I had to deftly adjust my position so she would face away from the vision of old world horror flying back and forth behind her head. Straining to keep the smile on my face while envisioning a hysterical customer crashing through the store with a bat tangled in her hair, while visions of lawsuits danced before my eyes, was almost too much to bear! Mercifully, she headed back up to the front as the bat literally flew right above her head to the rear of the store. She glanced around for a moment or two more and then bid us adieu.

Something to keep in mind as you visit a local merchant. Most try to keep a pleasant demeanor about them despite perhaps having a bad day, no sales, a migraine that just won’t quit or trying to distract you from the “Sword of Damocles” ever so delicately balanced above your head.

Let us not forget that bats are a very important segment of our ecosystem. They can consume thousands of small insects *each, every night!* They are very important to agriculture the world over.

So, if you are enjoying a cozy night at your vacation home and hear a high-pitched screech accompanied by the soft brush of leathery wings, give us a call on your way to the hotel room that your significant other will insist on departing for. We’ll be there first thing in the morning to remove the offending little beastie. Been there, done that!

For Whom Does the Widow Weep?

The Black Widow spider weeps for no one. She is even known to kill her mate post copulation, or if he merely attempts same in a manner that doesn’t please her. Harsh!

While executing some pre-4th clean-up at a clients home, Richard ran across some spider webs adorning the pickets along the deck. They ranged from the simple to the massive Funnel Spider webs. As he was using a stick to wrap the webs around to facilitate the web removal, he noticed that several of them housed black widows. Black widows usually prefer dark, hidden locals in which to await their prey. During periods of hot, dry weather black widows are known to venture out into the open. In fact, most of the funnel web spiders were dried husks in their own webs, falling victim to the black widow which now resided within. We have even discovered a black widow inhabiting the back our mailbox! I alerted our client to the 10 or so black widows discovered in the open along his deck so he wouldn’t be surprised to find one of his guests mummified in the morning.

I have very recently read that the black widow has garnered some serious competition. The Brown Widow spider is showing up more and more and seems to be displacing the black widow in southern California, Florida, Georgia and some other locales as well. While the black widow will venture out into the open, the brown widow gravitates toward more hidden areas such as underneath patio furniture, the recess underneath your garbage can handle and even the down-turned edge of a flower pot. Their bite is also less toxic than their shadowy relative. Small comfort to the arachnophobes among you, I’m sure.

So whilst relaxing in your deck furniture, yakking it up with friends and relatives, don’t let the languid days of summer lull you into mindless complacency. Especially that which allows your hand to wander underneath the lip of the of the lounge chair in which you are relaxing. Bwahahaha!

...a note from Cindy

I hope everyone has had a wonderful 4th of July holiday. It was great hearing from all of you in need of our services. We want to thank you for your business and hope that you were satisfied with our work. The 4th of July is our busiest holiday of the year followed 2ndly by Thanksgiving. So, if you think you will need our services in November let us know as soon as possible.

You may be interested in this miscellaneous information of things we have been seeing this year. Chiggers and ticks have been bad and are continuing to remain so. Black ants have been a common site in many of our client’s homes, yet the ladybugs this year have been few. Carpenter bees have been very abundant this summer. With the hot, dry weather you can expect scorpions in your basement. The bear population in the area along with coyote is on the rise. If your black piping or downspouts have been torn up, it was probably a bear trying to make the small animal that crawled into the pipe its snack. Keep an eye on your cats or small dogs as coyotes will nab them, although they generally only hunt at night or early morning. If your basements are musty, please consider installing a dehumidifier to run into your tub or shower. It is amazing what a difference it can make in your home.

If you have not gotten to the farmers market you must go. It is great, the food is fresh, inexpensive and your dollars are a huge help to the local farmers. Saturday morning is the best time but you can also go on Tuesday afternoon from 3-7PM.

Hope you continue to enjoy your summer and we look forward to talking to you soon.