

Pest Connection

Tips For a Pest-Free Home

VOL 17 ISSUE 6



What's In My Wall?

Understanding What the Noise Is and What to do About It

By Brenda Roberts

I recently spoke with a customer regarding movement they were hearing in a wall in their house. They suspected it was a squirrel that had found an entry point in the garage. They wanted to know, "What is the next step?" A few days later, while brushing my teeth, I heard something in the wall next to me. I turned the toothbrush off, listening again. There it was, the scratching sound, directly parallel to my elbow. I pounded on the wall, but nothing. A few days later, I heard it again.

I sat down with Paul Matusiak, 30-year pest control industry veteran and Batzner Service Manager. I explained the noise in my wall and told him about the conversation I had with the customer regarding the squirrel. I wanted to understand how it was determined WHAT was in a wall? How they get there? And, how to get them out? He asked me, "Was it consistent, or did it stop and start?" He went on to describe how breezes can cause noises that can be heard through the walls, by jiggling a loose soffit,

for example, or that turning a faucet on can test for a loose pipe triggered by running water. If the noise is consistent, it is most likely non-pest related. On the other hand, pest noises are more intermittent as the pest stops and starts whatever its doing. They may also stop moving if they hear noises from you. Matusiak explained that feeling for vibrations can also help determine the cause. Consistent vibrations indicate a non-pest source. Scratching noises, however, can be anything from mice and rats, to a large nest of carpenter ants communicating back and forth, to wasps, hornets, and yes, larger rodents such as squirrels.

Regarding my case, Matusiak explained it was very rare for a mouse to be inside an interior wall, but as he dug in further, we hit on the reason. "It is unlikely a mouse would be in an interior wall on the second floor unless it was near the chimney." Bingo! I realized the chimney ran right behind the bathroom wall.

[Continued]

Fall Invader Prevention – Service Required Before First Frost

by Julie Breuer

What are fall invaders? Fall, or occasional invaders, are a group of insects that invade structures *occasionally* in fall, often finding themselves inside buildings when weather conditions become threatening to their survival. They include Asian lady beetles, boxelder bugs, and stink bugs.

What time of year are they most active? Active year-round, fall invaders spend the majority of their time outdoors. However, you are likely to notice them inside during fall months as they search for a place to overwinter.

Why should I care about them in the fall? As autumn approaches, they are looking for a cool, dry place to snooze over the

winter. In September and October, they tend to group together on sunny exterior walls of south-facing buildings, seeking out warmth. Upon landing on buildings, they make their way through tiny cracks and crevices looking for protected places to hibernate.

How do I prevent them from moving in? The best way to control fall invaders is to seal or repair any cracks and crevices (around windows, eaves, doors, insulation and siding). Pay close attention to places where pipes and wires enter your building. Part of Batzner's service includes applying a protective barrier to cracks and crevices before the first frost, which helps to minimize the population.

IMPORTANT - Why should I have service before the first frost? If preventive treatment is not completed before the first frost, they will be able to enter the building and overwinter until sunny, late winter or early spring days start to happen and temperatures begin to warm up. They slowly start emerging from behind baseboards, walls, attics, and suspended ceilings. This is why, even though *Frosty the Snowman* may still be standing strong outside, pests mysteriously appear in the middle of winter.

Prevent fall invaders from overwintering by scheduling your service before the first frost. Keep fall invaders where they belong—outside! ♦

Featured Pest

Asian Lady Beetles More Than a Nuisance

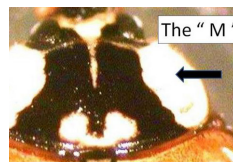
by Tiffany Tenley

Unladylike Behavior

Looks can be deceiving. These are not the friendly ladybugs that childhood books, costumes and characters depict. These beetles are an imported variety from Asia, known as the Asian lady beetle. Most importantly, they're known to cause health issues while overwintering in homes. Notice the defining "M"-shape mark on the head.

Characteristics - Asian lady beetles will seek out shelter during cooler months, mainly fall. Once they find an entry point into a home, they will stay put over the winter, only to emerge again in spring.

Behavior - They tend to congregate on sunny, south sides of buildings, and are attracted to dark colors, such



Asian Lady Beetle



Ladybug

as screens. As a defense, they secrete a foul smelling, yellow fluid, which stains cloth, walls, floors, etc.

Appearance - Adults are 1/4 inch long, reddish-orange with black spots and boast an "M"-shape marking on their head.

HEALTH RISKS

They tend to bite at will, and can pose potential health risks; especially when an infestation occurs. Reactions can vary from a mild cough or eye irritation, to asthma or pink eye. Young children tend to be especially affected with upper respiratory problems. Precautions should be taken while removing Asian lady beetles, preventing direct contact with skin and eyes.

DIY or PROFESSIONAL APPLICATION?

Treating Asian lady beetles can be extremely difficult. *Self-treatments can be ineffective and costly. Once they enter a home, they tend to hide in cracks and crevices, making it nearly impossible to ensure complete eradication.* However, when treated in the fall, prior to them overwintering, professional application can be quite effective in avoiding infestations leading to health risks.

IMPORTANT FALL SERVICE REMINDER

Treatment before the first frost is essential for preventing fall invaders from overwintering in your home. Schedule treatment before an infestation takes hold of your house. ♦

Ask the Experts

Featuring advice from Dan Stawicki, Associate Certified Entomologist



Q: Can you identify this caterpillar found under my maple tree, and where it came from?



A: This fuzzy, little guy is an American Dagger Moth caterpillar. You can look, but don't touch. That's because the black hairs (setae) contain some fairly potent venom.

You will most likely spot these venomous critters June through October, and near food sources such as Alder, Ash, Birch, Elm, Hickory, Maple, Oak, Poplar, Walnut and Willow trees, which also act as a stable cocoon site.

They range in color from bright yellow to soft white (as seen in the picture); the brighter the color, the younger the caterpillar. Within 10-14 days of forming a cocoon, they will emerge as a moth. In this final stage, they will no longer pose a threat.

If you, or your children encounter one of these, **do not touch it**. The venomous black hairs can break off, imbedding into the skin; leaving you with a painful sting and itchy rash. Either carefully move them to a safe location where they won't pose a threat, or simply leave them be.

See the caterpillar in action - https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DoKhyaO_NEQ

Sincerely,

Have a question? Reach out to us on Facebook, Twitter, or at Batzner.com

Prevention is Key For a Pest-Free Home

Prevent Reinfestations

Prevention is key to keeping your home pest free! Once we have eliminated an issue, it may look as though you are safe to discontinue professional pest control. Pests are smart - they often reappear when Batzner goes away.

Ongoing BAN™ treatments prevent reinfestations by utilizing targeted pest control based on seasonal and individual conditions.



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Placing mouse control devices in the attic and the basement, along with finding and securing outside openings to ensure more won't find their way in, should do the trick. Squirrels need to be trapped, so finding their access point is imperative—there are usually two openings far apart. Do NOT block their access before getting them out as they are very destructive and will chew through electrical wires and walls in an attempt to get out.

Stinging insects and carpenter ants need to have their nest destroyed, so first identify their access point. Depending on the type of pest, a pest control professional will then treat by either injecting dust, foam or spray into the wall, and often will apply a barrier around the outside of the building.

Regarding the potential damage that can happen if the situation is allowed to progress – carpenter ants, squirrels, and rats can cause expensive damage to a building's infrastructure. Mice contaminate food and destroy furniture, clothing, and other stored items when they nest in them.

Periodically check the outside of your home, paying close attention to loose or water-damaged soffits. They are often the access point for many pest. Broken sewage pipes, foundation cracks, roof damage, rotted window and door frames—the slightest opening is an invitation for unwanted guests.

After having my home serviced, the issue seems to have been resolved.

Hearing something unusual in your wall? Call us to determine if further investigation is required to discover the cause. ♦



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