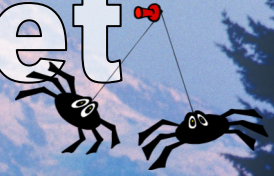


The Spinneret

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Winter 2016



As of this writing we are still in the throes of deciding the makeup of the next cycle of political representatives. By the time you read this the decisions will have been made. Hopefully your candidate is in office and your ecstatic. If not, better luck next time. Either way we are on our way to a brighter future. Right?

On a brighter note, Here's hoping you and your family are well and safe in the coming year. *Happy Holidays!* -Ed.

Rodents:

Raucous romping rats ruining your rest?

Malicious mice mauling your munchies?

It's not too late to take control before the party gets completely out of hand.

Often, when I'm called on to help a homeowner with rodent activity, I'm treated to a tour of the interior of the home but without exception these infestations lead back outside.

If you have an access on the outside of your home to let service people underneath, even if it is fitted with the most attractive or elaborate cover, chances are there is an opening big enough to let small animals get under your home.

Lift the cover and if you can see into the crawlspace then you probably need to install an access panel that is rodent proof.

Have you had a contractor under your home recently? Contractors are notorious for busting out foundation vent screens to get wires, gas lines and plumbing under homes. (You guys know who you are.)

Check for openings around wiring. More than 1/4 inch around these utilities and the screen needs to be repaired. Just bending the wire back into place won't do either because large rodents and raccoons can bend the wire too.

Take a look at your foundation especially under the deck. All you should see is a vertical concrete surface. If you see exposed concrete running horizontally along the surface of the soil you have an exposed footing that animals can dig under easily. It may take a little effort but four to six inches of gravel can save you a lot of headaches. Rodents love to chew on plastic including the cladding on wires and the softer plastic water lines.

Speaking of plastic, the garage door seal is often chewed through if the edges of the seal are exposed or damaged. Keeping the seal in good repair can save an expensive trip to the auto shop. If the door can't be maintained due to settling concrete, sometimes removing the seal altogether and having the door adjusted to eliminate gaps at the bottom can solve the problem.

Continued...



Uninvited Guests:

Planning on traveling over the holidays? You don't want to bring these back with you.

Bed bugs are still a serious problem for travelers so your best defense is to plan ahead.

When you reach your destination and when you return home, stage luggage where it can be quarantined. The garage does nicely but the tub will do in a pinch.

Toss everything in the dryer for 15 minutes. At 117 degrees all stages of the bug will die. Any fabrics that can't survive the dryer should be professionally cleaned.

Luggage and other items can be sealed in air tight containers with DDVP pest strips in the garage for 7 days to kill all stages of the bug. Hotshot and Nu-Van are two products available through hardware stores.

If you think you have brought bedbugs home with you, get professional assistance immediately. Almost all of the over the counter products are ineffective at controlling bedbugs, including diatomaceous earth. ■



Fleas:

Spiders have an undeservedly bad reputation for biting people. While many of us realize that spiders have no desire to bite us our phobias won't let us let go of the myth.

Yet there is an insect that eventually comes into every pet owners home that will bite us at the first opportunity. In spite of this the spider is usually the first to get the blame. Dog, cat, and rat fleas are relatively common in Washington.



Continued...

Rodents:

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Once you finish checking at ground level it is important to look up too.

The roof is designed to be rain proof but, with rare exception, it is not going to keep out rodents.

Rodents, including mice are good climbers. If you have any tree limbs near the roof they should be kept trimmed. Mice and rats can clear about three feet from a standing jump. Give them a running start and they can go a lot farther. Keep branches at least five feet from the roof.

Same thing holds true for trellises and shrubs. Keep them short or you just give rodents a ladder.

If you have a manufactured home or older, skirted post and beam home these recommendations also apply, unless there are gaps in the skirting or the skirting allows animals to dig under it.

The only practical solution for these homes, short of re-skirting is trapping or bait maintenance.

Did your home pass inspection?

If so, congratulations! You can rest peacefully knowing there will be no critters celebrating in your ceiling.

If not, don't put off repairs. These things won't get better by themselves and we're here to help. ■



Fleas:

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None of us likes getting bit by a flea but few people give much thought to just how risky their bites can be.

Though very rare, cases of plague still occur in Washington and can be transmitted between rodents and humans by flea bites.

Cat scratch disease (*bartonella henselae*), which causes skin lesions and fever is transmitted in the feces of fleas when cats groom themselves and then scratch, bite, or lick us.



Rickettsia or Flea born typhus causes headaches, fever, weakness, body aches, and may be accompanied by a rash that usually starts on the chest and spreads over the body. It can cause lifelong debilitating injuries and occasionally death.

Fleas contract the bacterium while feeding on infected animals. They pass the bacteria to humans through their feces as with cat scratch disease. In addition the bacteria can be contracted when powdered feces are inhaled or come in contact with eyes while petting an animal.

Tapeworm which is transmitted in animal feces gets picked up by fleas when the immature fleas feed on feces and ingest the eggs. The eggs lodge in the flea digestive tract and stay with the flea as it matures. Animals contract tapeworm when they ingest adult fleas while trying to groom them off.

Young children are at highest risk for tapeworm because they tend to put things in their mouth that could be contaminated with eggs.

As if that weren't enough to make you skip dinner, just scratching a flea bite can introduce bacteria that can cause lesions as bad as any brown recluse bite.

So, next time you get a bite, give the spider a break. Check your pet for fleas and make sure you're consistent about treating them even if you don't find any.

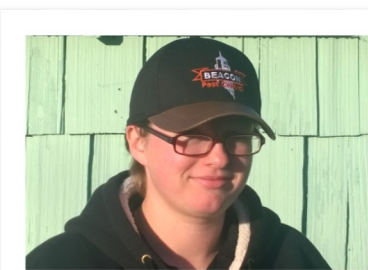
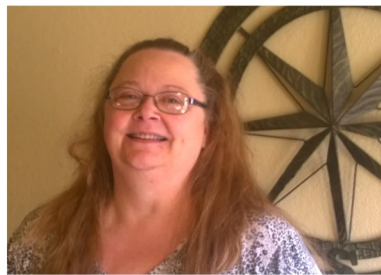
You will appreciate it and so will your pet. ■

New Faces:

Janet Herard joins our office staff as receptionist.

A native of Washington with over 20 years of account management experience she has already whipped the front office into shape and is ready to serve you.

She's also a rabid Seahawks fan so don't be surprised to see her decked out in blue and teal on game day.



Kelli Rohr joins our field staff as a service technician and will be completing her training this winter.

Kelli is a native of Grays Harbor, and a graduate of Montesano High School with an associates degree from Grays Harbor College. She's also a member of the

Society for Creative Anachronism, an organization dedicated to reenacting medieval society. ■

Growing Pains:

Well, if the back-hoes and bulldozers weren't enough to give it away. We're getting new sewers at the office.

But that isn't the end of it.

By this time next year we should have a new shop and offices to house our operations.

We'll try to keep disruptions to a minimum. Phones and operations should continue normally but some traffic congestion will be inevitable.

Please be patient. Thanks. ■

