



CLOSE TO HOME

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

<i>At Your Table?</i>	1
<i>Flying Squirrels</i>	1
<i>Carpenter Ant Conversations</i>	2
<i>Tankless Water Heaters</i>	2

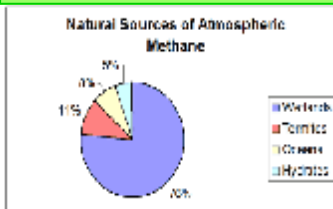
Mice and Men



"The world will never starve
For want of wonders;
But only for want of wonder."
GK Chesterton



Did you know that termites produce 11% of the world's natural atmospheric methane, a "green house gas"? (EPA)



The common house mouse, pictured to the right, is considered a commensal rodent—that is, it "eats at the same table" with humans. Like it or not, they are here to stay and there are some things you should keep in mind if they're at your table.



Few pests evoke such conflicts as the house mouse. They are cute, to the point where some keep their relatives as pets. For others, the mere sight of one will cause a house evacuation.

Humane societies are undecided on how to control mice. They recognize the need to keep their facilities pest free, but how is that done in a humane way? This is not an easy question to answer for those for whom it is an issue.

The primary concern with the presence of the house mouse in living quarters is one of human health. Because the mouse eats at the same table, it has several

opportunities to pass along disease and viruses to people.

Bobby Corrigan is a nationally recognized expert in rodent biology and control. His work takes him into the thick of rodent infestations. When he speaks of the health hazards of mice, he does so from first hand experience. He contracted Lymphocytic choriomeningitis (LCM), a virus passed to humans from infected house mice that can cause severe illness.

People living among the house mouse can pick up LCM by inhaling aerosolized particles of rodent urine, feces, or saliva; or by eating

food that has been contaminated in some fashion by the house mouse. Corrigan maintains that LCM is likely the most serious mouse-borne illness to the general public. It is not easy for Doctors to diagnose and is often written off as the common flu.

Mice are also known to be carriers of salmonella, a food borne illness much in the news today.

The cute mouse in the picture above seems harmless enough. The devil is in the details. That little bite of the carrot; that quick run across the counter; Ample time and exposure to release an invisible pathogen in your home and food supply.

The moral to the story is to deal swiftly with mouse problems; Clean surfaces well where they have been, and dispose of food that has been exposed.



THE PEST INSPECTOR'S JOURNAL!

THE ODD - THE SCARY - THE HUMOROUS

I recently received a call about a concern regarding squirrels in a house. They could be heard occasionally in the attic, one was caught on the first floor and released in the woods, and the pet cat had found one in the basement. This is unusual as gray

squirrels are usually only in the attic.

Upon further investigation the problem turned out to be a family of flying squirrels. Yes, the same kind that inspired the Rocky and Bullwinkle show!

Flying squirrels are the only nocturnal squirrel. They are gliders, and can travel throughout a house!





Ant Rant



(Overheard)

Ant Sally: Ahhh, feel that warm sun! I know spring is nearby when this happens.

Karl the Worker: Yeah, I feel it but don't get too excited, It's only February.

Ant Sally: That's why I am excited! I love to surprise those humans. They never expect us this time of year. I just love to see their faces when we come out in droves. And the names they call us! I just can't repeat it.

Karl the Worker: You don't need to. I hear it every year.

Ant Sally: Last Thursday was a day to remember. I bet a hundred of our finest ran out of the nest and crawled throughout this house. Wow did we create a stir for this Rochester family. They were talking about

us to everyone they talked to on the phone. We even made it into their text messages! I must say, it was one fine rally!

Karl the Worker: You have me to thank for that. I organized the whole thing. The queen never knew it was coming! We workers are really the strength of this colony. Without us there would be no nest to live in, no food to eat.

Ant Sally: Don't get too big of a head there, Karl. Without the queen, there would be nothing to organize.

Karl the Worker: I know. It just seems we workers don't get the respect that is due. Just listen to those humans. Last Thursday when we all ran through the house, all I

could hear was, "Where are they coming from? We've got to find the queen!" Don't they realize that if our queen died, we'd simply elect a new one? In fact, I think you would make a pretty fine queen, Sally.

Ant Sally: I bet you say that to all the workers.

Karl the Worker: I like your spunk, Sally. You really enjoy making life miserable for the humans. You've got what it takes to be a good queen.

Ant Sally: You make me blush. Well, let's get back to the work at hand. When is our next big rally?

Karl the Worker: I'll twitch my antenna when it's time. The best is yet to come!



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YOUR QUESTIONS ANSWERED HERE!

Q: What are some of the pros and cons of tankless water heaters?

A: Tankless water heaters have been in use in Europe for many years. In recent years they have been increasingly popular in the states. They offer significant energy savings over conventional water heaters, but there are some things to consider.

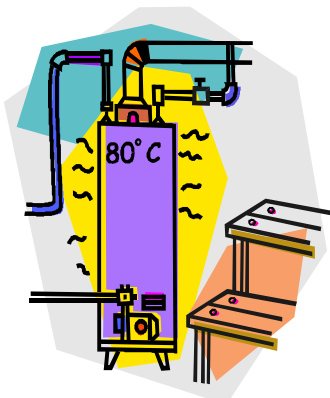
First, tankless systems are much more costly to purchase. When considering a purchase of a new hot water system, it is best to consider lifetime costs, including purchase price, installation, energy costs, and lifespan. To realize the savings, it is important to be in the house for the long run. These same considerations come into play when considering upgrading to a high efficiency furnace.

A common complaint of the

tankless system is the amount of time and water needed to finally find the hot! Pump systems can be installed to reduce this time, and your savings.

Having said that, tankless systems are likely to be the standard for the future. They just make so much sense.

So you can ride the wave of the future now, but your savings come in about 20 years.



ASK JOHN!

Q: We have an ice damming problem on our roof. Are heat coils safe and effective?

A: Heat coils are electrical wires that are installed on roof ends and valleys to prevent snow and ice buildup. When turned on they warm up slightly, enough to melt ice.

I have heard different opinions about heating coils from

the stand point of safety. I have spoken with firemen who have been to house fires caused by the coils. On the other hand my neighbor is a fireman and he has them on his house. I think the key to safety is having them professionally installed, and connected to an outlet protected from water by a ground fault interrupter circuit.

Ice damming is best dealt with by ensuring adequate attic insulation and ventilation. Once that is in place, some houses will still have localized buildup problems. Heating coils can be a good solution for those areas, particularly where snow tends to drift and collect.

My home has some ice damming and my solution has been using a roof rake in heavier snows.

