

# Close To Home

Quarterly Tips From *Fraysier Home Inspections*

January, 2003

## What's Nesting in My Attic?



### **ASK JOHN!**

**Q:** Having just sold my home, the buyer sent a home inspector. In my attic he found what he thought to be a nest. Large piles of hay were found 2 feet deep. The attic opening is 10-12 feet away from the hay. We have heard no noises in the 6 years we have lived here. What may have brought this nesting material in?

**A:** **Birds!** European Sparrows will commonly nest in cracks and crevices of a house. One favorite place is under the hood of roof vents. As they build their nests the hay, feathers, trash with which they build will fall through the screening into the attic. I have personally seen several hay piles six or more feet deep in one attic.

The health concern with birds in a home is **two-fold**: Bird mites will often infest nesting materials and can infest nearby living areas. It is best to have this removed.

Secondly, fecal matter from birds can become airborne if disturbed and can carry bacteria and viruses that are harmful to people.

The solution? Have an exterminator clean all the nesting materials out of the attic, and have them screen off the roof vents so birds cannot enter.

**Q :** The home inspector found a black mold/mildew on the roof sheathing in the attic. Should we be concerned about this, and what can be done to remedy it?

**A:** Mold on roof sheathing in attics is very common. It is caused by a moisture buildup in the attic that condenses on the colder roof surface. Mold spores present in the air attach to the damp wood and feed off the wood. Mold is a wood destroying organism that can eventually weaken wood fibres enough that a roof replacement is needed.

There are well documented cases of respiratory problems resulting from the presence of molds in the home. If

sensitivities exist, it is best to have the home tested.

The remedy for molds is drying the area out so they cannot grow. Below are several factors that contribute to house moisture:

- a) Roof water drainage.**
- b) Landscaping**
- c) Ground water level**
- d) Basement water**
- e) Bathroom ventilation**
- f) Insulation**
- g) Attic ventilation**
- h) plumbing**

Making certain each of these are properly maintained will minimize mold potential.

**Q:** We have been noticing large black carpenter ants in the second floor bedroom for a couple weeks. Why are we seeing them in December, and what should we do?

**A:** Carpenter ants are dormant during the winter unless they are nesting in a heated area. It is not uncommon to find carpenter ants in the winter, and it does indicate a definite nest in a heated space.

When ants are seen primarily in a bedroom, the first place to look for them is in the hollow doors of closets. They enter through small holes in the bottom edge left after manufacturing. If

ants are seen frequently in the closet, take the door into the garage and carefully spray in the entry hole with an aerosol labeled for carpenter ants.

This tip can save you \$600+ in extermination fees that aren't really necessary for the problem.

### Pest Seminars

A number of **real estate offices** have requested we come out to present a short session on pests and how they affect the home buying process. These have been very lively discussions with agents bringing their own "war stories". This is a very practical, what to look for, session with pictures and helpful handouts. Call **216-1085** to schedule a time!

### For Homeowners!

As a **homeowner**, have you had a pest problem you didn't want to call an exterminator on? Several have requested a pest inspection from an **objective** source that didn't have an extermination service to sell. Perhaps your home is on the FHI termite map! We'll give you a full report with recommendations.

### Fraysier Home Inspections

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### Fraysier Home Inspections

*Helping home-buyers make  
wise decisions*

*Close To Home* is the quarterly newsletter for Fraysier Home Inspections. Send your questions to John at **fhi3@juno.com**.

