

CLOSE TO HOME

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Did You Know?

- Mice are disease carriers?
- What can enter an uncapped chimney?
- What radon gas is?
- Why carpenter ants are a winter problem?

Read the stories to find out more!

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EEK! A MOUSE! THE WHITE FOOTED MOUSE

Cute, isn't he? A picture says a thousand words, but some were left out here. This common house mouse is primarily responsible for the health closure of restaurants, the spread of Lyme disease and the hantavirus, and the contamination of millions of dollars of food each year.

This is the most common mouse found in structures in the northeast. Considering their reproductive capabilities, it is clear why large infestations can occur quickly:

Gestation: 24 days

Able to Mate: 44 days old

Litter Size: 2-9 young

Litters/year: 2-4

Lifespan: 1 year plus

Once in a structure, they will seek out a food source and nest nearby. Urine more-so than droppings will contaminate a food supply and will largely go unnoticed. A black light will reveal rodent urine on food products.

Lyme Disease? You

thought that was carried by ticks—and you are right. Ticks will live on mice and bring the disease in homes.

Mouse droppings will carry in them the dreaded hantavirus disease. Care should always be taken in vacuuming droppings, using a hepa filter at all times.

And lets not forget the damage mice can do to wiring. They are a major contributor to house fires. Check out the "Close To Home" issue 6/2004 on our website to view some electrical damage from rodents.

Getting control of a mouse problem has a two pronged approach. First of all, entry areas must be reduced. Consider the garage to be the main way mice gain entry to a structure. Making sure the garage doors seal snugly will help. More important is sealing any holes from the garage into the basement or house. This can be done with steel wool or mortar. Also make



White Footed Mouse

certain all utility entries are well caulked. This is a major highway for pests.

Removing mice from a house is more for the strong of heart. Trapping and baiting both work, but neither are pleasant. Choose a safe method for your situation.

Are mice a pest? You bet. But more than a pest, they are a health concern. That's why food companies take rodents very seriously. So should we. Our homes are our castles! Make them safe.

Call Castleguard for a professional appraisal, and service.



THE PEST INSPECTOR'S JOURNAL!

THE ODD - THE SCARY - THE HUMOROUS

"I've got something in my chimney. You need to come over right away and get it out!"

As I arrived at the house, the woman met me at the door and took me to the living room where the fireplace was.

"I've heard a noise all morning. I think it is a squirrel."

I needed reinforcements for this one, so Bill and I went in with gloves and a cardboard box. As we opened the flu, we heard the noise, but it didn't sound like a squirrel. And the

webbed feet didn't resemble squirrel either. A Mallard duck! Out he came, feet first into our box. We let him go down the street.

The client didn't need convincing—it was time for a chimney cap!

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YOUR QUESTIONS ANSWERED HERE!

Q. A friend of mine recently had a radon test done on his home in Fairport and it had a high reading. I live in Fairport. Should I be concerned about radon, and should I have my home tested?

A. Radon is a naturally occurring gas, a bi-product of the decay of radioactive material underground. Though certain regions are prone to high levels, it is impossible to predict levels in any given home. It can vary from house to house depending on soils and geology.

The NYS Dept. of Health reports the average radon level in Monroe County homes to be 3.3 pCi/L. Anything that is 4.0 pCi/L or higher requires remediation. They also report that 24% of homes tested in Fairport had elevated levels.

The radon test is not very

expensive and a good thing to do, especially if the basement is a living area.

Radon gas is a cancer causing agent that can be vented from the house if it is found in dangerous levels. Have the test done!



Q. Here it is January, and I have found large black ants wandering in my house. Why do I have ants in the dead of winter? Isn't it too cold for ants now?

A. A large black ant inside in January is a carpenter ant. It is fairly common to see them from January straight through the summer. Here are some things to bear in mind:

1) You have a nest inside.



ASK JOHN!

Carpenter ants live in large nests in tree trunks in your yard. They survive the winter with an antifreeze like material that protects them. These nests become active when temperatures reach into the 60's in April.

Smaller nests inside homes become active as the sun angle changes and as central heating warms them to begin foraging for food again. This can occur from

January through March. Ants seen inside during this time are always from an inside nest where it is above 60 degrees.

2) Where is the nest?

The million dollar question! First places to check are any damp areas where water has leaked—especially plumbing.

Next, hollow interior doors and window frames. Carpenter ants love these natural nesting sites.

Carpenter ants damage more than your peace of mind—they destroy wood! Have Castleguard take a look for you.

