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### Did You See?

- The Cicada Killer?
- The largest yellow jacket nest last year?
- Something move on that hotel mattress?

Read the stories to find out more!

### Home Inspector Licensing

New York State is requiring home inspectors to be licensed as of January 1, 2006!

Visit the following website

To confirm licensees:

[www.dos.state.ny.us/lcns/homeinspector.htm](http://www.dos.state.ny.us/lcns/homeinspector.htm)

John Fraysier is licensed.

Call us for a copy!

# PEST! OF THE YEAR

Each year we run across unusual pests, odd behavior, or peculiar nests. We like to highlight some of these in the "Pest Inspector's Journal", but there are too many to catch them all in four newsletters. This issue of **Close to Home** will look at two "best of the year" stories. The Pest Inspector's Journal looks at the "**Nest** of the Year", while we look at the "**Pest** of the Year" in this front article.

Cicada Killers have an ominous name and size, but ironically are relatively docile. The Cicada Killer is a solitary wasp that can grow to nearly three inches long.

You can understand the concern the manager of a riding stable had when they called Castleguard with a large wasp problem in the horse barn. The large open arena where children learned to ride horses was dotted with dozens of mounds in the loose soil.

We dug up several of the



Cicada Killer Wasp



With Prey

mounds and found dead cicadas buried in the burrows. A sure sign of the Cicada Killer! And then, as if on cue, the adult wasp flew in carrying a cicada and went into a burrow.

The adult wasp carries the dead cicada into its burrow, lays 1 egg, and as the larva hatches, feeds on the cicada until only its outer shell re-

mains. During the fall, the larva pupates and the adult wasp emerges in the spring.

Though the Cicada Killer is capable of a painful sting, they are not very aggressive and usually leave people alone. Their size alone is enough to scare most aggressors off!

In this case with the riding stable, no treatment was recommended. It was near the end of the season, and horses can be quite sensitive to pesticides. The wasps posed very little danger to the children, or horses.

Cicada Killers need large spaces of sandy, well drained soils to burrow. In severe infestations, treatments should be done to prevent a stinging hazard.

Though not a common pest problem locally, cicada killers can visit your back yard if the soils are right.

**It's a Bird. It's a Plane!**

**It's a Cicada Killer!**



## THE PEST INSPECTOR'S JOURNAL!

THE ODD - THE SCARY - THE HUMOROUS

### Nest of the Year!

In November, I was called to remove a "bees nest" from a vacant home. I was told it was in the attic somewhere. As I looked behind the knee wall, there it was, all four feet of it. It was along an outside

wall beyond ten feet of open rafters. Crawling over, I removed it only to find a few large yellow jackets still alive inside. One never knows if the nest will be full of angry yellow jackets. The autumn chill had killed most of them. Gloves and veil were handy.



# Fraysier Home Inspections

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## YOUR QUESTIONS ANSWERED HERE!

**Q:** Back in November we had occasional yellow jackets wandering in our son's bedroom. Why so late in the year, and is this a sign of a bigger problem?

**A:** Yellow jackets are seasonal nesters. Fertile females that have survived the winter begin one celled nests in the spring where they lay the first egg. The nest slowly grows until June, when numbers are great enough that the queen can lay several eggs daily, and many hatch daily. The nest then grows quickly.

In the fall, all but a few of the females will die off, leaving a nearly empty nest. Those that do survive usually leave the nest in search of food. Those are the ones that you see wandering in the house.

It is not a sign of a larger problem, but of a dying problem! Wait a few weeks and they all will disappear.

Very little can be done effectively at this stage to stop the problem.

**Q:** This fall we have had a black and red beetle on the exterior siding of our house. We were concerned they may damage our house? What are they and should we be concerned?



**A:** What you have described sound like Box Elder Bugs. They get their name from the tree they love to inhabit, the Box Elder. They are found on other trees as well.

The good news is that these are not wood destroying insects. The bad news is, they love to winter over in homes like yours. They are similar in habits to cluster



### ASK JOHN!

flies and lady bugs. They crawl into cracks in the house and live in the walls and under siding for the winter. They return to the outdoors when it is warm enough in the spring.

Solutions? Trim vegetation that is close to the house. Box Elders are not prized trees, so if you have these, you may want to remove them.

**Q:** USA Today recently did an article on the resurgence of bed bugs in the United States. Have they shown up in our area yet, and what should we look for?

**A:** Bed bugs are definitely on the rise in America and they are showing up in our area. I have run across them once in the past year, and I know other exterminators that are finding them, too.

The picture below shows what to look for. Bed bugs are small, but recognizable. They congregate close to their food supply (people) in cracks of bed frames, mattresses, and night tables.

They are a particular problem in hotels where they hitch a ride in luggage.

