

CLOSE TO HOME

CastleGuard



INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

Know Your Hornets! 1

Pest Inspector's Journal 1

Termite Talk 2

Log Homes 2

**Our New
Phone
Number!
381-0395**

**Home Inspector
Licensing**

**New York State requires
Home Inspectors to be
licensed as of January 1,
2006!**

John Fraysier's license:

#16000009230

Through 1/16/2008

OUCHH !!!!!



BALD FACED HORNETS!

These are the most aggressive of the bees and wasps that can inhabit your yard. Their nests are hidden in trees and shrubs and are easy to bump into—and they don't like being bumped into! They will chase you down, and they will win. More than one exterminator has taken refuge in a swimming pool.

The so called bald faced hornet is not a true hornet, but a relative of the yellow jacket. There is only one hornet in the United States, and that is the European hornet.

In any case, these black and white wasps are to be avoided. They are more aggressive than the yellow jackets we know, and their sting is worse, too.

There are several do it yourself approaches to eradicating a bald faced hornet's nest. None of these are endorsed by the author...



- 1) Throwing stones, footballs, and water balloons at these nests will anger the colony but will not chase them away.
- 2) Blow torches.
- 3) Snip and drop method: snip the branch, drop nest into bag.

These methods were meant to be humorous. After being stung several times after an

unsuccessful attempt, the humor disappears!

EUROPEAN HORNETS

European hornets are pictured below. They resemble yellow jackets but are much larger. They rarely build free hanging paper nests like the one pictured to the left. They nest in wall voids and hollow trees. Like bald faced hornets, they are aggressive but need to be provoked to attack.

An interesting characteristic of these hornets is their attraction to light. While the rest of the bee and wasp world is busy sleeping, European hornets will be drawn to a porch light at night and bang against a window!



THE PEST INSPECTOR'S JOURNAL!

THE ODD - THE SCARY - THE HUMOROUS

I was called out to do a pest inspection on a home in Rochester recently. As I was finishing the outside portion, the realtor met me at the door and said the client had changed their mind, they didn't want the pest inspection now that they learned the

bank did not require it.

I was about to leave when the realtor reappeared and said to complete the inspection, her clients wanted the extra "insurance". Two minutes later I found termites in the garage framing. As I went

into the basement, termite damage was discovered there, too. And all this in an neighborhood I have never found termites before!

An \$85 pest inspection saved this first time homebuyer \$2000+ for treatments!



Termite Talk

(Overheard)



Thomas: We don't have it that easy in Rochester; snow, cold. Not like our friends to the south.

Theresa: Stop your complaining! You have plenty of food, and your family is here. It's plenty warm all winter below the frost line. At least we don't have hurricanes to bother us.

Thomas: You're right. We hardly have people to bother us. Most people don't even know we exist up here!

Theresa: Yeah, and when they do find us, they think we're maggots. I don't appreciate being mistaken for a maggot! We eat wood,

not garbage!

Thomas: Shh! Not so loud! Mistaken identity helps our cause. Many home inspectors don't know how to find us, or where to look. They are our friends, especially when we're just getting started in a house.

Theresa: But if homebuyers have a pest inspection before they buy, we're in deep trouble.

Thomas: Not always. But I do agree that the pest inspection is the worst thing to come our way since DDT. We can only hope the pest inspection has the same future; you know, "no longer used"!

Theresa: I've heard some good news on that front. Most realtors don't insist on the pest inspection unless the bank does. I think we should be proud of the fact we have kept such a low profile. Few people really consider us a risk up here. That's an achievement!

Thomas: I'm starting to think we have it pretty good here in Rochester. It's a great place to raise a colony!

Theresa: Well, I think we've talked enough. Let's get back to eating; we've got a lot of mouths to feed.

Thomas: Our work is out of sight!

[Fraysier Home Inspections](#)

[CastleGuard Pest Management](#)

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YOUR QUESTIONS ANSWERED HERE!

Q: We are considering purchasing a log home. What kinds of issues are problems we should be on the watch for?

A: Let's start with wood destroying insects. Carpenter bees are often a problem on log homes. Check for their signature 3/8" holes on the downward facing curve of the logs, and all soffits and fascias. Wood boring beetles like Powder Post, and Old House Borer are commonly found in log homes.

Log homes need regular maintenance on the exterior to keep logs in good shape, and the wind out. The caulking between logs is called chinking, and this needs to be refreshed periodically. Watch for cracks and separation. Regular staining will help not only the appearance, but will keep water out of the logs. Watch the end cuts of the logs for dry rot and dete-

rioration. Logs can be very expensive to replace.

There are companies that specialize in log home maintenance like this. I would consider making contact with such a company prior to purchase so you are familiar with maintenance requirements. Thorough home and pest inspections are very important as well.

Q: I have seen circuit wires tapped off the main entry lugs in electric panels before. What is wrong with this procedure?

A: A Lot! Tapping off the main entries in this manner is done when there is no longer room for additional breakers in the panel. Instead of setting up a sub-panel, a wire is run off the main entry.

This is a dangerous situation. This is a relatively small cable that is connected

directly to the main lines coming in from the street. There is no protection in place to prevent 200 + amps of power from burning these wires. It should always be protected by a properly sized circuit breaker.

This is also a red flag of amateur workmanship. It raises the question of what else there is that cannot be seen.

ASK JOHN!



Q: I hear scratching in my wall. Someone told me it was ants, someone else said bees. What is it?

A: If the scratching noise is constant day and night, we can rule out mice. They scratch sporadically, and at night.

There are two insects that nest in walls that make this noise: **Carpenter ants, and Yellow jackets**. The best way to know which, is to follow this rule of thumb.

May and June: It's Carpenter Ants.

July through October: It's Yellow Jackets.

The noise is nearly identical for the two insects. Carpenter ants seem to quiet down later in the summer.

As the Yellow jacket nest grows in summer, it gets louder.