

# CLOSE TO HOME

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### Did You Know?

- Yellow Jackets are at their peak now?
- Not all pest inspectors find the pests?
- When to upgrade your electric panel?

Read the stories to find out more!

### A Taste For Wood

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For Details

# YELLOW JACKETS

## THE STING OF SUMMER

This is the time of year when summer's sun has not only brought on the harvest, but also the unpleasant possibility of attack by stinging insects. And of those, the yellow jacket is the most common.

Yellow jackets begin their single cell nests in the spring when a fertile female finds an appropriate nesting site and builds a small paper nest. The nest will grow very slowly as individual eggs hatch, the larva grow and pupate, and adults emerge.

As temperatures rise in June and July, the period from egg to adult is shortened and the nest grows rapidly. It hits it's peak in September with warm sunny days. What started as a nest the size of your thumbnail can now be two feet in diameter, with hundreds of workers caring for young and expanding the nest.

It is common in August to look up in the sky on a sunny

day and see yellow jackets on a trail between their nest and a food supply. And that nest



could be in your home!

Yellow jackets are versatile nesters and will take advantage of several sites to build their home. Here are a few favorite spots:

- **Attics:** Through an exterior hole, nests are built under insulation.

- **Foundations:** Hollow blocks and basement sills in back of insulation are favored areas.

- **Yard Holes:** Holes made by voles, woodchucks, etc. are perfect locations to build a nest protected from enemies.

- **Tree Limbs:** This is a more common site for hornets, but

yellow jackets occasionally build hanging nests in trees.

A single yellow jacket sting for most people is nothing more than a bad horse fly bite, stinging at first, then itching. But for others, it can be a matter of life and death. Multiple stings can cause the body to go into shock requiring immediate medical attention. An Allergic reaction to a sting can bring on death if it is not treated promptly.

Here are a couple of tips that can make your summer sting-free:

- If allergies to stings run in your family, have your house inspected in August for nests. They are **easy** to miss unless you are looking for them.

- If you find a nest on your property, have it treated professionally. It's not worth a trip to the hospital. And treating a nest in the wrong way can make the problem worse.

### CastleGuard

*Solving Pest Problems Safely*



## THE PEST INSPECTOR'S JOURNAL!

*THE ODD - THE SCARY - THE HUMOROUS*

**Pest Inspectors are easy to find these days, but are they all the same?**

I did a home and pest inspection on a house in Greece recently that had serious termite damage to the sill plate of the basement. Large

sections needed replacing that would cost in the thousands of dollars. This damage was found not by visual clues, but by probing the wood with a screwdriver.

Upon discovering the problem, the sellers had their own

pest inspector check out the problem. His report showed no problems with termites; nothing was **seen**. When later told by the realtor where the damage was, he found it and apologized for missing it.

**Call the Experts!**

# Fraysier Home Inspections

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## YOUR QUESTIONS ANSWERED HERE!

**Q:** While walking through a home during the open house, we noticed a crack in the basement wall, with some bowing. How big of a problem is this?

**A:** This sounds like a considerable problem. Whenever there is visual bowing or shifting of the wall, the repairs will be quite expensive. A couple things about basement wall cracks:

1) Vertical cracks by and large are usually less of a problem than horizontal cracks. Vertical cracks often occur due to settling and usually do not need immediate attention. They do need to be monitored, though, for movement.

2) Horizontal cracks usually occur from pressure on the outside wall. This can come from water, tree roots, and shifting soils. These kinds of pressures can cause walls to

fail and need remediation soon. It's with horizontal cracks that bowing and wall displacement occurs.



**Q:** When do you recommend an upgrade for an electric panel?

**A:** There are three main situations where I will recommend an upgrade for the electric panel.

- When the incoming power (amperage) does not meet the needs for the house. As a rule of thumb, 100 amps can handle three major appliances (dryer, central AC, etc.). 150 Amps can handle five major appliances. Most new construction uses 200 amps.

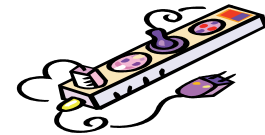


### ASK JOHN!

- When there is no expansion room in the panel. There may be ample power available, but if there is no room for new circuits, the best option is to upgrade the service. In some cases, this can be done by adding a sub panel.

- Fused circuits. Though it can be argued that fuses are safer than breakers, their presence usually go hand in hand with an under-

sized system. Breakers are also simpler to use.



**Q:** I'm sure you get asked this a lot, but what is the worst thing you have seen while investigating pest problems?

**A:** This past March I was called to an elderly man's home that had a rat infestation. Rats freely ran through the basement and living areas. It was a sanitation crisis. Solving this problem made a safer, cleaner home for the owner.

