

PestGazette

Brought to you by Quik Kill Pest Eliminators, Inc.



Hot Apple Cider... in a House Without a Spider

Cider, or fermented apple juice, has been around for over 2000 years! On a cold winter day, it makes an excellent treat. The best part — you can feel good about drinking your apple cider. It's low in calories and full of antioxidants. Try this easy recipe for hot-spiced cider (*right*).

Once it's done, you can keep the stovetop or crockpot on warm and ladle the apple cider straight from the pot. (You'll also love the way this yummy holiday treat scents your home.)

Make sure to share a cup of your apple cider with us, your trusted pest management professional.

Ingredients

1/2 gallon apple juice or apple cider; 2 cinnamon sticks; 2 whole cloves; 2 allspice berries or whole nutmeg; 1/2 orange peel, cut into strips; 1/2 lemon peel, cut into strips.

Directions

Pour apple juice/cider into a large stainless steel pot (crock pots or slow cookers are best but not necessary). Place spices and peels into a cheesecloth. Drop cheesecloth into apple juice/cider. On the stovetop, heat to just short of a boil. In a crock-pot, heat for 2 hours. Remove cheesecloth.

Firewood Pests

Aaaaahhh, winter time. Time to snuggle up next to a warm cozy fire with those we love. But that warm sentimental moment can go up in smoke if our winter woodpile is infested with pests. Here are some common firewood pests and some ways to help keep them from entering your home.

Bark Beetles

These beetles (*left*) are less than 1/8 inch long and brown or black in color. They tunnel immediately beneath the bark of dead or dying trees, excavating elaborately patterned galleries on the surface of the wood. Firewood infested with bark beetles is a hazard to healthy trees of the same species adjacent to the outdoors wood pile. However, these beetles will not re-infest wood or furniture within the home. Large numbers of
continued on next page

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Firewood Pests

(continued from page 1)



Horntail wasps are frightening to look at, but pose no threat to either the home or the homeowner.



Some firewood pests, such as pillbugs, often emerge within days of being brought indoors. They are mostly harmless, but can be a real nuisance to homeowners.

emerging bark beetles can become quite annoying when firewood is stored for long periods inside your house, garage or shed.

Horntail Wasps

These large wasps are frightening to look at, but pose no threat to either the home or the homeowner. The female's large ovipositor (egg laying makeup) is adapted for laying eggs in wood and not for stinging people.

Miscellaneous Invaders

Various other pests hide or over-winter beneath the bark of firewood. Examples include sow bugs, pillbugs, centipedes, ground beetles, spiders, scorpions, and various cockroaches. Usually, these pests emerge within a few days of the wood being brought indoors. For the most part, they are harmless, other than being a nuisance.

Avoiding Firewood Pests

Control of firewood pests is best accomplished by managing your firewood. Never spray your firewood with an insecticide! This could result in harmful vapors when the wood is burned. Call us, your trusted pest professional and we will be ready to offer you services, inspect, and identify any firewood pests to make sure they are not harmful to your home. If it turns out you have wood destroying insects such as carpenter ants, termites or powder post beetles, we are here to offer a solution.

You can assist us by taking the following steps:

1. Store firewood outdoors. Bring in only what you plan to burn immediately or within a few hours. Storing firewood for extended periods inside the home, garage or basement allows pests developing or hiding in the wood to emerge within the structure. (Remember: firewood stored indoors can also become a harborage for rodents.)
2. Position the woodpile away from the side of the house and off the ground. Firewood stacked against the side of a building can create a moisture problem and provides a hidden, direct avenue for termites and carpenter ants into your home. Stacking the wood off the ground (e.g., on poles suspended between concrete blocks) increases air circulation and drying.

3. Burn older wood first to minimize the time during which arthropod infestations can become established.

Controlling Firewood Insects in the Home

For insects that do emerge inside your house, simply remove them by hand or use a vacuum cleaner. If you think something has taken up residence in your home, be sure to quickly to give us a call.

Protect your home from unwanted guests by "pest-proofing." Take a few moments and allow us to inspect your property and make recommendations that may prevent rodents, snakes and insects from using your home as a winter hideaway.

Here are some things your pest professional will look for:

- Make sure all cracks around the outside of your house are sealed so mice, rats, snakes, and insects can't squeeze in (rats can get through openings 1/2" in diameter — mice can get through holes smaller than a dime, or 1/4"). Openings will need to be filled with something strong like cement, mortar or caulk. Steel wool can be used as a temporary fix. Stuffing cracks with cloth won't help and rodents may use it for bedding.
- Holes and other rodent damage in your home or garage need to be repaired and protected. Make repairs and, if necessary, cover the damage with hardware cloth (1/4" squares). If you cover rodent damage with a piece of wood, rodents may chew through it again.
- Doors, windows and screens should be in good repair and fit tightly. Caulking will also keep pests out and help lower fuel bills.
- Do your French drains need screens? If so, *ask us* to help you select the screen size.
- Check around your dryer vent and other openings to make sure they aren't being used as a handy way to get into your house.
- Check landscaping around the home's perimeter to see if rodents are making use of shrubs as a home. Removing leaves and grass clippings from around the foundation, cleaning out window wells, and general yard clean-up will get rid of hiding places for pests near the home. ■

Source: University of Nebraska-Extension at <http://lancaster.unl.edu>

Cold Winter, Warm Pests?

Don't Let Unwanted Pests Call Your House Their Home This Winter

Winter is the most stressful time of year (especially in the North) for most forms of life. The key hardships are a lack of food and cold temperatures. But, don't let a reduction in outdoor animal activity make you think there is nothing going on in the woods ... or maybe even in or under your home!

There are three main strategies that wildlife pests and rodents can employ to survive harsh weather: migration, dormancy, and sticking it out. Many species migrate between seasons, such as Canada geese. But, other species, such as white-tailed deer, just move to areas that are more survivable. Reptiles and amphibians move to protected places underground or under water to avoid freezing temperatures. And, more recently, most of us have noted the indoor migration of the Asian ladybird beetle, the boxelder bug, and the brown marmorated stinkbug!

There are many climates where winter stress is significantly lower for animals. Logs, caves, holes, dead/hollow trees, under snow, and within your property (such as your porch, attic, shed, garage, crawl space, etc.) are examples of places that provide shelter from winter extremes. These are critical places for pest wildlife and rodents to be found all winter long.

Dormancy is a controlled reduction of body metabolism, evidenced by low oxygen consumption rates and lower body temperatures. It is a phenomenon of many warm-blooded animals in the North; hibernation is its most dramatic form. Torpidity is another form of dormancy similar to hibernation and is not restricted to northern species but can be found in the tropics, too.

Many northern species undergo metabolic changes that allow them to "sleep" through the winter. Sleep, of course, is not what they do, but torpidity can superficially appear that way. Their body temperatures are maintained a few degrees above their ambient environment, which is usually in a place protected from weather extremes (...like under your front porch). Hibernators are usually small animals, because they have high rates of metabolism in the first place. Chipmunks, mice, ground squirrels, and groundhogs are examples of true hibernators that may be sleeping under your home or in a structure nearby.



*Curling up under a warm blanket is a nice way for humans to keep warm in winter ... but **most** pests have other methods of coping with cold weather.*

For cold-blooded animals, dormancy is a reduced state of metabolic activity largely controlled by environmental conditions. Pest insects will over-winter as eggs, pupae, or adults in sheltered places. Their dormancy is often coupled with specialized chemical adaptations to help them survive the winter season. To help resist freezing, chemicals associated with dormancy are sugars and certain alcohols such as glycerol, sorbitol, mannitol, and ethylene glycol (... not unlike the antifreeze chemical used in your car's radiator).

Winter remains an active time of the year because many species have adapted to active lifestyles during the winter that allow them to just stick it out. These species must just rely upon built up fat reserves, and, as a result, their margin for survival is often slim.

As you endure winter's cold, keep your eyes and ears open to the possibility that your home may be housing unwanted over-wintering pest guests. Hear any scratching? See any evidence of nests or fecal remains? Remember to call us, your pest professionals, to help you inspect, identify, and make treatment recommendations for any pests that might be calling your cozy house a home this winter. ■



Interesting Rat Facts

Rats have an excellent sense of smell.

Their hearing has been known to reach into the ultrasonic range.

They have poor vision and also can't see colors. This is why they have long whiskers (vibrissae) to feel what's around them.

Rats are born naked (hairless) and weighing about 5 - 6 grams (approx .01 lbs.).

Adult rats can weigh between 250 and 400 grams (approx 0.5 - 0.9 lbs.).

Their average life span is 1-2 years.

Their average litter size is 8-12 pups.

Rats originated in the grassy steppes area of present day Russia, but can now be found in nearly any part of the world; and they have been transported by commercial shipping for centuries.

Rats are excellent climbers and use their tails for balance.

Rats are excellent swimmers as they can stay below the water for up to three minutes. They often travel through sewer systems and in major urban areas have even been known to pop up in toilets.

Be certain to call us to help pest proof your home from would-be rodent pests this winter! ■

INTERESTING FACT:
Rats have poor vision and can't see colors. This is why they have long whiskers to feel what's around them.



The Indianmeal Moth is one of the most common of the pantry pests in the United States.

Indianmeal Moths

Have you recently noticed small moths flying in a zigzag fashion around rooms (kitchens and pantries) in your home and making their way to lights, such as T.V. screens and computer monitors, at night? Or perhaps you've seen the yellowish larvae (worms) crawling up walls and suspended from the ceiling attached to a single silken thread. The Indianmeal Moth is one of the most common of the pantry pests in the United States.

Damage is caused by larvae biting into packaging and spinning silken threads as they feed, in turn webbing food particles together. Besides infesting all cereal food products and whole grains, larvae also feed on a wide variety of foods such as dried fruits, powdered milk, cornmeal, popcorn, flour, raisins, prunes, nuts, chocolates, candies, health foods, spices, bird seed, dog and cat food, fish food, graham crackers, dried red peppers, pastas, etc. But, they can also get into seed pod jewelry, potpourri, floral arrangements, wreaths, organic candles and soaps containing things such as dried pomegranates, berries and nuts.

Most homes become infested when adult moths or larvae "hitchhike" inside a package (such as dog food) from the grocery store. Not only homes, but restaurants, grocery stores, warehouses, pet stores, seed companies, mills etc., can become infested. Before purchasing grocery products, always examine foods for infestations. Examine broken and damaged packages and boxes to avoid accidentally bringing pests into your home. Check the packaging



date to ensure freshness. Purchase seldom-used foods in small quantities to prevent long storage periods, especially in warm weather. Always store susceptible foods in insect-proof containers with tight-fitting or screw type lids. Use older packages first and inspect frequently to avoid any spillage which might attract insects.

Careful sanitation is the best method to avoid stored product pests. Locate the source of infestation and quickly get rid of it. Call us and we can inspect and find the source of an infestation and then make various recommendations, including pheromone traps to disrupt the mating cycle. We can also use insecticide materials carefully labeled for control of nuisance moths flying around rooms. Our pest professionals have the training, experience, equipment, and materials to control your pest problem and leave you to enjoy a relaxing night by the fireplace. ■



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