

Diggin' in the Dirt: Home Invaders

By Chip Bubl
Oregon State University
Extension Service - Columbia County

Home invaders

Many insects overwinter as adults. Prior to our rearrangement of the natural landscape, they found homes in whatever was around. For example, box elder bugs love to nestle down into the furrowed bark of an old Douglas fir tree. You can occasionally see them by the thousands there. Falls shorter days and cooler nights signal to many of these insects and some spiders that it is time to locate protection from the coming cold. They congregate on sunny house and barn walls, perhaps comparing house-hunting notes.

The number one irritation on sunny fall days is the box elder bug. This insect is basically black and oval and about one-half inch long. There are fine red lines crisscrossed on its back and a red color on the underside that is revealed when it flies. Box elder bugs congregate in huge numbers on the side of your house and do a little sunbathing. Then they wiggle their way through minute gaps around window frames, door moldings and anywhere else they can sense warmth and shelter. Here is the good news: they don't do any structural damage to your house. They don't eat anything and they don't breed inside, they are just trying to stay warm. However, they do seem to sleep walk as the temperatures warm up sporadically in the winter and then they

land on your head in bed or in your cereal bowl at breakfast. This can be vexing.

This year, they have been joined by two other true bugs: the brown marmorated stink bug (BMSB) and the bordered plant bug, *Largus cinctus*. The BMSB is big and shield shaped. There is a native species it somewhat resembles but it is the BSMB that has exploded in numbers. It is a non-native species from Asia that has been in Oregon for about 10 years. They seem obsessed with crawling over screens on opened windows for inordinate lengths of time at my house. The BMSB is becoming a serious agriculture pest but it isn't easy to kill them on homes. Both bugs enter houses the same way a box elder bug does.



Brown marmorated stink bug (BMSB)

The Asian lady beetle also seems to be building up their numbers, at least in some parts of Columbia County. This insect has a huge range of wing color combinations ranging from 19 black spots on an orange background to

two yellow spots on a black background and all color and spot combinations in between. They can congregate in huge numbers, obscuring the color of your paint. When they first hit Columbia County in the mid-1980s, one homeowner removed three five-gallon buckets of them from her carport.

The best defense is to exclude all of these insects. That means caulk and lots of it around the doors and windows. With high winter energy prices, that isn't a bad idea anyway. Pest control operators will sometimes use a persistent exterior insecticide to manage the migration but results are quite mixed. Once the insects get inside, there is little you can do except to vacuum them or gently escort them back outside. They don't do structural damage to houses. They can leave droppings that have to be cleaned up. Don't squash these insects, especially the BMSB and the Asian Lady beetle. They smell really bad.

Spiders, which may have been growing up in and around your house all summer will also seek refuge. Most are harmless, though the giant house spider (*Tegenaria gigantea*) gives many people the creeps. They eat other insects. Be nice to the spiders and gently relocate them outside as well. Many spiders seem to enter under doors, sliding or otherwise, around windows, and through foundation vents and ducting or piping under the house.

Food Preservation Questions? OSU Extension Service Has Answers.

Are you planning to preserve food from your garden or purchased from a farm this summer? If so, call or visit the OSU Extension Service office **before** you start canning, freezing, or drying. Costly and potentially harmful mistakes can be made by using outdated canning recipes and instructions. You can find free publications AND pressure gauge testing at the Columbia County Extension office located at 505 N. Columbia River Highway in St. Helens (across from the Legacy Clinic). If you have questions, phone the office at 503 397-3462. You can download for free all our food preservation publications at <http://extension.oregonstate.edu/fch/food-preservation>. An additional great resource is the National Center for home Food Preservation at <http://www.uga.edu/nchfp/>. In July, the OSU Extension Statewide Food Preservation Hotline (1-800-3547319) will open Monday through Friday from 9am – 2 pm starting on July 13th and ending on October 16th.

Chip Bubl
Agricultural Extension Agent and
County Leader
Oregon State University Extension
Service
Columbia County
505 N. Columbia River Highway
St. Helens, OR 97051
Phone: 503-397-3462
Fax: 503-397-3467
chip.bubl@oregonstate.edu

Creature Comforts: Marijuana and Our Pets

By Michal Smith

Now that marijuana use is legal in our state, it's appropriate to discuss its effect on our pets in an open forum. Although there may be wonderful medicinal properties of the plant, there are still risks to all users, human or otherwise. Dogs and cats can be poisoned by marijuana from second hand smoke exposure, or from direct ingestion of marijuana baked foods (e.g. pot brownies, pot butter, etc.) laced with THC.

In dogs and cats poisoned by marijuana, clinical signs can be seen within three hours, and include severe depression, walking as if drunk, lethargy, coma, low heart rate, low blood pressure, respiratory depression, dilated pupils, hyperactivity, vocalization and seizures. Vomiting is often seen with dogs despite the anti-vomiting qualities of THC.

In Colorado, where marijuana has been legal for a while now, veterinarians report seeing a four-fold increase in the number of marijuana toxicity cases.

Much of the increase is due to pets getting into their owner's stash of THC-infused baked goods, or edibles.

While humans presumably know how little of each item to ingest, their pets – dogs especially – are prone to eating as much as they can. (Think of them as having a permanent case of the munchies.) Pet owners should be careful to keep "treats" away from their pets. Pets that have ingested marijuana should get medical help right away and owners should never withhold the fact that the pet has eaten marijuana. While pet owners may be wary of authority figures, veterinarians remind us that they are here to help your animal, not tattle, so be honest!

If your dog or cat ate marijuana, call your veterinarian immediately for life-saving treatment advice. Once at the vet office, intoxicated pets are typically treated with activated charcoals that can absorb the toxins, induced to vomit, and administered IV fluids.

Before you scream at this article, yes, many

pet owners whose pet has suffered miserably with chronic pain, often resulting from a terminal disease, have found relief from the plant, BUT the dose and the modality is prescribed and monitored by medically trained veterinarians. The above was to speak to accidental over exposure or overdose. It's reported that cannabis derivatives in the way of tinctures and oils are having a vast and positive effect on many pets being treated for an array of different health conditions, not just terminal ones. If this sounds like something you'd like to know more about, consult your veterinarian.

New in the store this month are Plume Tutus, made by our own local designer, Crystal Tabaldo. These are colorful, customizable and available in several sizes. Stop by and see the quality and selection! Schwan's Soft Serve vanilla and chocolate is now available year-round and is right here in the store!! We're looking forward to seeing you 7 days a week!! Open Mon-Fri 10-6; Sat 10-4; Sun 12-4; 503-429-PETS(7387).

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