



Flow Test

Easier Than a Pop Quiz

from Bob Quinn, the Water Doctor

Preparing to sell your property? The last thing you'll want is the stress of discovering that the flow rate for your well is in an unacceptable range for your buyer as per the contingency clause in your contract.

This simple test that will provide you with an early warning: Turn on a garden hose while you keep an eye on the gauge of your pressure tank. A normal gauge signals the pump to come on when the pressure drops to about 40 lbs. and to go off at approx. 60 lbs.

Let the water run until the pump comes on, and then adjust the flow of water until your pressure gauge is holding steady at the midpoint (approx. 50 lbs.). If the needle creeps up to 60, run more water; if it drops toward 40, run less.

When you are satisfied it's holding steady, leave the water running for 4 hrs. Don't worry, the electric cost to do this is only about 25¢. After 4 hrs., time the number of seconds it takes to fill a 1 gal. container. Divide those seconds into 60 and voilà! you have the number of gallons your well or pump is producing per minute.

Water is a geological cocktail so drink

M O R E water!



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Next deadline:

May 1

Notes from a Rogue entomologist

When insects meet the press

BY RICHARD J. HILTON

Insects and the press have a love-hate relationship—the press loves to hate insects. A couple of examples came up over the past few months. At the end of 2015 there was a national news story about an increase in “kissing bugs” and Chagas disease (see note below), which kissing bugs can carry. Kissing bugs are large blood-sucking insects that will feed on a person's face while they are sleeping, thus the name.

As usual, there was some truth in this story, but it got way more press than it deserved. Since 1955 there have been fewer than 40 cases of Chagas disease transmission documented in the US, but it's a given that whenever you have a story featuring a large blood-sucking insect, you are well into “if it bleeds it leads” territory.

I got a call from one of the local news outlets, and explained that kissing bugs are not an issue locally. However, after the story aired nationally, I fielded three inquiries about kissing bugs, including one from a doctor's office. In all cases, the suspected kissing bug was our native and quite common western boxelder bug (also known as the maple bug) that is a frequent home invader. I got off easy—a lab at Texas A&M University received 800 inquiries, resulting in fewer than two dozen cases that actually involved kissing bugs.

There is no doubt that insects that feed on human blood make good copy. In fairness, I admit that I am not entirely innocent in this regard—I have penned columns on bedbugs and, more recently, head lice. But the press does have a way of amplifying things.

In researching the kissing bug story, I found out that kissing bugs



The boxelder (or maple) bug, a common home invader (www.volcanolands.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/08/Boxelder-Bug-1.jpg).

have been making headlines for years. In 1899 L.O. Howard, one of the premier entomologists of the time, commented on stories about a kissing-bug “epidemic”: “By ‘epidemic’ is meant the newspaper epidemic, for every insect bite where the biter was not at once recognized was attributed to the popular and somewhat mysterious creature which had been given such an attractive name.”

Another story on insects that got some national press concerned research done at North Carolina State University, where all the insects found in 50 houses were identified. This was a fascinating study of the diversity of insects and other arthropods, such as spiders, that show up in our homes. The headline or lead invariably focused on the finding that the average house contained over 100 species of insects, making it sound like we are literally surrounded by insects! But in combing through the original study and hearing one of the authors interviewed on the Jefferson

Exchange, I understood that the vast majority of the insects identified were minute, and that the researchers were not finding the insects that *live* in our houses so much as the insects that *die* there. Many small insects fly or crawl into homes and cannot survive long. The insects collected in this study were more often dead than alive, with windowsills and even spider webs being particularly good places to find specimens.

Four groups were found in every house: ants, carpet beetles, gall midges, and cobweb spiders, with an honorable mention to psocids (book lice), which were found in all but one house. Ants and cobweb spiders were no big surprise; neither were carpet beetles, especially since dead insects are one of their favorite foods. Gall midges (very tiny flies) have no business being in a house; they essentially float in like aerial plankton.

Book lice were interesting. Small and innocuous, they are known to be house inhabitants, although I have never seen one in a home. The only book lice infestation I have observed locally was years ago in a chinchilla farm (and you read that correctly). I suspected the high humidity where the chinchillas were being reared was a cause of the problem, as book lice thrive in humid conditions, which might explain their prevalence in North Carolina, especially in summer months when this study was conducted.

But, to my mind, the most curious result of this research was not what species were found, but what species they did *not* find. Not a single maple bug was seen (and no kissing bugs, either).

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Note: Chagas disease is a debilitating infection that harms the victim in two stages: an acute phase that begins about a week after the bug bite and causes fever and occasional swelling at the site of the bite, and a chronic phase that shows up as long as 25 years after exposure, where the patient's organs are irreversibly damaged. Organ damage primarily targets the heart and digestive system (<http://mentalfloss.com/article/73604/1899-kissing-bug-epidemic-probably-wasn't>).

Burn reminder



Before burning outdoors any time of year, check with your fire district to make sure that day is an official burn day and not a *NO* burn day.

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