

DRIVE ON EARWIGS ADVOCATED BEFORE PESTS TAKE TOWN

Situation Growing Worse As Unorganized Battle Fails to Check Increase— Parasite Fly Best Foe

(By Bill Cummings)

How serious is the earwig situation in Medford and vicinity? This is the question the average citizen asks himself when confronted with the pleadings of those who are infested by the troublesome creature, or the suggestions of neighbors that a campaign be put on to rid the community of the pest that is evidently returning throughout all southern Oregon after a long period of recurrent activity.

For the past five years this insect has been making itself an undesirable guest in the homes and yards of local citizens, increasing in number, and coming to the front in periodic plagues that rouse the determination of the unlucky residents whose homes are infested to drive the earwig out of the city before it drives them out. So far, however, only a few have taken it upon themselves to do battle in any concentrated form on the peaky intruder.

They Have Wings

The earwigs form a distinct order of insects under the name "Dermaptera." They range from five-eighths of an inch to considerably longer, are dark-reddish brown in color, with antennae and caterpillar-like forelegs. Their wings are a striking feature which is seldom noticed, as they are usually folded tightly under a protective shell, and used for flight only on rare occasions.

The name is descended from the Anglo-Saxon word "earwiga," which means "ear creature" literally, in nearly all European languages the name has the same significance, which suggests an old superstition that the earwig crawls into the ears of sleeping persons, but fact is not known to substantiate this idea.

Some four hundred species of the insect have been described, but most of them inhabit warm or tropical countries. Fifteen species are known to inhabit the United States, only two of which are found in Oregon. These are the European earwig and the little earwig (Labiella minor, or Linnaeus), which varieties can be readily distinguished from each other by the difference in size.

Came in 1909

Records show that the earwig has been found in Oregon as early as 1909. It has since spread throughout most of the state, and in the city of Portland has caused much consternation. Earwigs are carried from place to place in any article that offers a dark, narrow hideout, and are easily spread by those who travel into uninfested regions from infested areas.

The earwig is in no way harmful or poisonous to humans, but is destructive to any material which may be termed edible, and is chiefly injurious to foliage of common plants. Among those subject to the several injury are bean, potato, beet, cabbage, cauliflower, pea, dahlia, zinnia, sweet william and fig. The injury generally consists of small, irregular holes in the leaves, and sometimes a tender leaf or stalk will be entirely destroyed. Earwigs will usually be found hiding in the ground about the plant upon which they have fed.

Swarm at Night

They conceal themselves in or about houses, under boards and rubbish piles, under the bark of trees and in crevices during the day, but at night they swarm over porches and make their way indoors to deposit themselves sometimes by the handful under rugs, in laundry and kitchen cupboards. On their nightly maraudings they have a tendency to climb on buildings, stones, tree trunks and fences.

In Medford and vicinity the infestations of a general nature, but is more pronounced in certain neighborhoods than in others. One local resident reports that a host of earwigs was found inside a window sash, and it was said that the bugs eat their way into wood. On Almond street the destruction of a cherry tree is attributed to earwigs,

which swarmed into cracks in the trunk and burrowed their way underneath the bark.

Live Without Food

Another local citizen has been troubled with the bugs to such an extent that he used a blow torch to burn them out of hiding places. A resident states that he observed four earwigs tightly coiled in a glass bottle and allowed no food. Their remarkable stamina is illustrated by the fact that after the bugs had commenced to devour each other in the third week, and two were in this way killed, the remaining two lived for a month.

Methods for the control of the earwig include traps of various kinds. In Medford many residents have cut down the number of pests by placing crumpled newspapers in the yard at night and burning them with the collected earwigs in the morning. A flower pot half full of excelsior inverted over a stake in the ground has also been found a good collector and the bugs can be shaken out in the morning into a bucket of water or oil. Several local citizens have found that pieces of garden hose two or three feet in length scattered about the yard are good traps. Piles of rubbish which are burned usually send a swarm of earwigs scurrying for better shelter, and in this way they may be killed in great numbers with scalding water.

Poison Poor Plan

Poison baits are also used, and destroy numbers of the bugs when scattered about the outside of buildings and around trees and shrubs. Commercial baits may be purchased, but are not generally considered a worthwhile means of control. Poison bran was used in Portland's extensive 1932 earwig campaign and figures show that the cost per block averaged \$16.25 for one application.

Birds as a rule are of little value in the control of earwigs, although several people report that Bantam hens if allowed to roam about the yard will destroy the bugs, but the nocturnal habits of the earwigs make this means of combat unprofitable. Toads have been said to devour the insects in great quantities, but they are almost unknown in nearly all earwig infested areas.

The Newest, and so far the most satisfactory agent to be introduced in earwig control is the parasitic fly. This parasite is liberated in an infested area in the form of parasitized earwigs, which have been imported into southern Oregon from the Portland entomologist and released in colonies. The parasite develops within the earwig as a maggot, eventually kills it and then hatches into a fly. The process is repeated and developed as the flies lay eggs which hatch into more parasitic larvae.

Need United Effort

This method of control, according to County Horticulturist L. P. Wilcox, is the most logical way to combat the local infestation, but he states that success will only be obtained through a united community drive. The effect of the treatment is not evident for two to four years after the fly has been introduced. Wilcox states, as the number of parasites must exceed that of the host before any relief can be expected.

Six colonies of the parasitized earwig were liberated in Ashland a year ago, and four or five colonies have been introduced in Medford, through the co-operation of certain residents who determined to try this method.

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CRACKERS CAUSE INCREASE IN PANTRY RAIDS

BIRD EVOLUTION TRACED BACK TO EARLIEST FORM

Present Toothless Songbird Descendant of Grotesque Flying Creature—Ostrich Labeled Most Primitive

WASHINGTON (UP)—Although it was a complicated job to trace the evolution of bird from the grotesque, toothed flying creature of 150,000,000 years ago to the toothless little songbird of today, Dr. Alexander Wetmore, assistant secretary of the Smithsonian Institution, has succeeded in classifying their family trees.

On the basis of recent researches, Dr. Wetmore has introduced a number of changes from previous bird classifications. He has divided the class into two sub-classes, five super-orders, 34 orders, 42 sub-orders, 23 super-families and 61 families. Originally Had Teeth Complicated as the bird's family

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tree appears, the secretary pointed out, it is comparatively simple to trace the evolution of the reptiles and mammals, since its evolution has been confined to narrower lines. He believes that near the end of the Cretaceous geological period when reptiles began to vanish, all birds probably had teeth which gradually disappeared as the group entered the Tertiary period.

The first great flock of ancestral birds, Dr. Wetmore revealed, were the Archaeopteryx, which included such winged reptiles as the Archaeopteryx and Archaeopteryx. Following them came the toothed birds of the New World—the first true birds recognized by fragmentary fossil records. They included the Hesperornis, Hageria and the Ichthyornis.

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3 oranges almonds
6 apricot kernels 5 pounds apricots
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Ranking as the highest branch of bird evolution, the great sub-order of Passerae or songbirds was placed at the top of the family tree in the classification. This group includes 30 families ranging from larks to finches and buntings.

U. S. Tree Planting Tumbled
WASHINGTON (AP)—Tree planting in the national forests was nearly tumbled last year, the United States forest service reports. Forces of the forest service, the civilian conservation corps and the NRA planting crews put in trees over a total of 69,215 acres.

Bellhop 48 Years
ASHEVILLE, N. C. (AP)—Forty-eight years ago the Battery Park hotel employed Charley Slaney, a negro, as a bell boy—and he is still on the job.

Libby's Picnic Specialties For the 4th

Corned Beef Libby's Brand, for slicing. No. 1 Can 18c
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Among those he met while on duty were President Theodore Roosevelt and President Wilson.

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