



## *BED BUGS !!!!!!! What do you mean there is NO answer?"*

*Well, after our Bed Bug meeting November 4th, 2010 (just after our season ended); we decided the best information for our newsletter is BED BUGS! Our information comes from Dini Miller, the specialist that spoke at our meeting.*

*How did this all start? First, the bed bugs began as cave dwellers feeding on bats in caves in the Middle East. Then they changed their source of blood meal to the caveman dwellers who made those caves their homes. Then as people traveled, so did the bed bugs. And it just goes on from there to the rest of the world. One source of travel of late is through our servicemen coming home from Iraq. Dini tried to talk to our defense department about her concern and was told by them that it was not happening... Guess what... she of course was right and now she is inundated with calls and emails concerning that very issue.*

*We were told by Dini that "There is no answer to Bed Bug elimination." Sooo just what DO you do? Prevention, prevention, prevention.... and more prevention! And just what do you do to prevent? Read carefully the following and begin NOW, before they arrive. Once you don't pay attention and don't kill each and every one you find, you will have just let them move in and they will develop into an infestation. At the point that you have an infestation, then YOU HAVE THEM! You will then always have them. You will pay big time... to reduce them, killing all the ones you can spray directly; but you will never reach those within your wall voids or subarea where they will run to hide from the chemical. Bed Bugs are not affected by a residual; that is why you only get the kill of them for the day, for the ones that the chemical reaches. They do not behave like other bugs; they do not trail the chemical to others in their family and they will not bring it back to their 'nest'. They will in time adapt to the initial chemical and become chemical resistant. A different chemical will need to be used at that point and the cycle of changing chemicals begins. In addition to that, they are highly resistant to all chemicals because they have a thicker exoskeleton, making it difficult to penetrate. While the chemical is wet it kills, after it dries - nothing. Sometimes they appear to have a hangover and then they recover. Tough little suckers!!!*

*So what you are looking at, if you get an infestation, is periodically paying somewhere between \$500 - \$800 to only reduce the population. It will never be a done deal that they are completely gone. Some dogs have been trained and are very expensive at \$10,000 per dog to sniff out bed bugs. At this time there is a 5 year waiting list for those trained dogs. Often they use two dogs to confirm an infestation. Treating for Bed Bugs is a very time consuming procedure and as it has been said, "Time is Money". It takes two pest control personnel about four hours each to do the thorough job it requires. You can now get a clearer picture on just how outrageous the cost can mount up to in dealing with these major pests. After all this being said, you have a better picture on just why prevention is the only absolute and economical answer.*

*In watching out for bedbugs in your home, look in the areas they will hide. They are tiny little bugs that make their meal on YOU! They are brown to reddish-brown, oval-shaped, flattened, and about 3/16 to 1/5 inch long (about the size of a ladybug). They turn dark red, swell and elongate after they have been feeding. They are night feeders so you won't see them so readily by day; you will have to seek them out. You will be looking for the bed bugs, blood stains, droppings and eggs. A flashlight and magnifying glass will come in handy. Their most popular locations are where you sleep and in dark protected sites. The distance they usually travel will be somewhere between 10-20 feet from where they are getting their blood meal, aka - you sleeping in your bed.*

*Not only will you find bed bugs in your home, but anywhere there is a high rate of people occupancy turnover; such as hotels, motels, dormitories, shelters, and apartment complexes. They are also hitchhikers so they can spread out great distances by airplanes, ships, trains and buses.*

- 1. Not only do you need to be careful with your travels, but also with that of your guests staying with you in your home. Also be very watchful of second-hand items such as clothing and furniture, especially beds and bedding. Concerning second hand furniture, especially beds; I would seriously reconsider accepting them into your home.*
- 2. If you suspect that you have been in contact with bed bugs, it is necessary to either wash and dry your clothing on high temperatures OR store them in a sealed plastic bag until you can wash them, or seal them for 70 days to prevent them from eating a meal which will cause them to die.*
- 3. When the bed bugs are not finding you, they will be attracted to animals like birds, bats and rodents. So be on the lookout for any entrances where these animals can access your house and seal these areas off. Be sure to eliminate those pests.*

*At our meeting, Dini Miller said that the general public thinks that there needs to be a new chemical that will take care of bed bugs and that the government needs to get involved. Well, that is just not going to happen because it is not the governments responsibility or area of expertise. The cost to develop a new chemical is somewhere around \$200 million and it takes 10 years to do all the necessary testing before it can be made available to anyone. 10 years after a chemical has been on the market, other chemical companies can then get the chemical because the product will have gone off of patent. They will not pay the price for development and then the original company loses even more money while the newcomers reap only profit. Chemical companies don't make enough profit in development to warrant the extensive expense. The reason companies are in business is to make a profit. At this time there is NOT ONE COMPANY even looking at doing it.*

*So back to what you CAN do.*

- 1) Inspecting your luggage and clothing for these 'world travelers' is so important when you travel. Be sure to keep your suitcases off the floor and beds while staying in accommodations and consider bringing a large plastic trash bag to keep your suitcase in during your stay. A great idea is to keep your suitcases in the bathtub because they cannot climb in or out of the tub. Also keep your toiletries in a ziplock bag. Don't forget to inspect your luggage along with your clothes before you*

leave..... inspect your luggage and clothing when you come home from a trip: a trip on vacation to a far away place... a trip to ANY hotel... a trip to a friends house... They are becoming very common and they might hitch a ride with you. Cleanliness is not a factor, they live with the poor and they live with the rich and famous. After coming home from a trip the best thing to do is vacuum your suitcase and put it inside a **clear** garbage bag, keeping it there for 70 days so that you will cover the time it takes for them to cycle through to propagation. If you brought back any bed bugs, over that time you will see them through the clear bag. You can then get rid of them. If not there, then unpack. Suspect clothing needs to be placed **immediately** in the dryer for 20 minutes.

- 2) Inspect after you have guests staying the night. Everyone is a potential carrier, it does not matter who they are, bed bugs are non-discriminate.
- 3) Vacuum thoroughly on a regular basis. Not only the carpeting, but the furniture too, along with mattresses.
- 4) Purchase a bed bug mattress and pillow encasement. We have found at our meeting a very effective and very well constructed product. They are bed bug certified protection, preventing a bed bug infestation inside your mattress and box spring. They have dust mite protection, are flame retardant, non-allergenic and water proof. It is said that you should replace your pillows at least every two years because of the buildup of mites within your pillow. The buildup gets so bad that in two years time your pillow will increase 10% in weight. With the encasement there is no buildup because there is no way that anything can penetrate, it is unnecessary to re-buy pillows due to the mites. The cost of the encasements is minimal when you consider all the money they will save you in the long run. At least 70% of bed bugs colonize the mattress and infrastructure of the box springs. Contact us if you are interested in purchasing mattress, box springs and or pillow encasements. We have a sample of the product in our trucks.
- 5) Clearing out clutter is a big help in being able to see activity and not provide harborage for them to hide from your inspection.
- 6) Entry points must be closed. Openings can be under doors, around windows and along electrical wiring.
- 7) Don't depend on a doctors diagnosis of bed bug bites; because they don't know themselves, they are just guessing. If they guess wrong that the cause of your bites are something different, you have just been delayed from getting on top of the problem and in that delay, you may have just initiated enough time to lapse to have an infestation develop.
- 8) Visibly search for them, they can travel fast and for many yards in search for food and the time is usually midnight to 5 AM. Remember that they are not difficult to find, they are approximately the size of a ladybug.

#### Locations to Inspect:

- ✓ Bedding; including mattresses, box springs and bed frame - inspect carefully along both top and bottom seams, tufts and folds, and any rips in the fabric
- ✓ Furniture - on upholstered furniture check along folds, crevices and seams – remove drawers from furniture and check the inside, top and bottom, joints and even screw holes
- ✓ Behind pictures on the wall and wall hangings - they will travel quite a distance to hide when the infestation is pretty heavy and they are fast moving
- ✓ Carpeting - along tack strips of wall to wall carpeting
- ✓ Baseboards - seal crevices and joints

- ✓ *Floor cracks - seal them with caulk*
- ✓ *Electrical Boxes - to help prevent any bugs from entering*
- ✓ *Window and door frames*
- ✓ *Loosened wall paper*
- ✓ *Wall cracks - seal them with caulk to help prevent any bugs from entering*
- ✓ *Ceiling molding*

### ***So when you inspect, what are you looking for?***

*You will see them; they are not microscopic and they are not invisible, contrary to what has been said out there in the public and on our airways.*

*They leave behind spots that are brown, dried digested blood... your blood. With these spots on the wall it can look like mildew growing out of control; but once you start cleaning you will find that when moisture comes in contact with it, the spots will streak the wall.*

*They can travel away from your bed to hide behind pictures on the wall. If you move the picture you will find them outlining the frame on the wall.*

*They also can hide amongst other furniture in the room in cracks and crevices. You can put climb up devices under the legs of furniture to help prevent them from infesting those items.*

*Some information you receive could very well not be accurate. One example is Dr Oz stated that the bed bugs bite in groups of three bites. NOT TRUE. They don't bite in a line either. They will probe looking for capillaries to receive their blood meal, allowing a rapid blood flow. They will feed any where from 5-10 minutes. In another 3-7 days they will need another blood meal, so you will not see them for a number of days. Most of the colony is in a digesting state. They can exist for up to 70 days without a meal. The experts at this time do not know how bed bugs locate us, but CO<sub>2</sub> as a result of breathing does have something to do with it.*

*Quick attention to the problem will aid in faster reduction. Sanitation measurers will aid in keeping control. Clearing out clutter will make it easier to access all areas for inspection and minimize the harborage areas accessible to the bed bugs. It is helpful to store non-essential items in another location until bed bugs have been treated. Daily vacuuming the areas you find evidence will be a good measure to take. Remember when done vacuuming, put the bag into a plastic bag sealing it tight and discard immediately. If not done, they will just come marching back out and into your home. When cleaning up, wipe off dead bugs, blood stains, eggs and droppings with hot soapy water. Bedding needs to be laundered on the hottest setting, and dried on hot for 20 minutes. The high heat is necessary to kill the bed bugs. As for mattresses and box springs, you can scrub the seams dislodging the bugs and eggs, and then vacuum. A zippered mattress cover would aid in preventing re-infestation. If the infestation is extreme, replacement of the mattress and box spring would be in order; but only AFTER the infestation has been reduced or otherwise your new mattress will be readily infested too.*

At our meeting this last fall we found an excellent bedbug encasement product for mattresses, box springs and pillows. Contact us at (360) 452-1727 for further information concerning the purchase of any of these encasements. If you don't have bedbugs yet, this will prevent any future infestation in your bed, which could save you a lot of money. Mattresses are too expensive to not protect. If you did have bedbugs in your bed, it would enclose them, preventing them from coming out and feeding on you. Without a blood meal for 70 days, any within your bed would die. These are also water proof further protecting your mattress.

The only thing currently found guaranteed to kill bed bugs was feeding on the blood of Meth users. We are not in any way condoning meth use, but it is an example of how potent it is.

At this time we are not treating for Bed Bugs. We would have to employ people just to handle them because they are so time consuming and there is no absolute solution currently. We have yet to receive one call on a legitimate Bed Bug problem.

