



# HOME & GARDEN

Home and Garden information center • 12005 Homewood Road • Ellicott City, MD 21042 • 1-800-342-2507

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## Indoor and Outdoor Pest Tips

- Often in late February termites reproductives start swarming. A swarm seen indoors could mean that a colony is directly under the house and feeding on its lumber. See our fact sheet for more information.
- Fleas are often a problem in homes even when there are no pets. The most likely source is an animal living in the attic, crawl space, chimney or some other sheltered area connected to the inside of the home. The offender is often a raccoon. First remove and exclude the animal from re-entry, follow up with frequent vacuuming of the house to collect the adult fleas and their larvae. Over time the flea problem will cease.
- Don't store firewood inside your home. Only bring in enough to burn at one time. Ants, wood boring insects and spiders are often hiding in firewood and will disperse inside your home.
- Fruit flies can be a problem when fruits and vegetables are allowed to sit for long periods on kitchen counters. Use up your produce quickly and the flies will gradually die off..
- Indian meal moths are a very common pest of stored grains and grain products, cereals, bird seeds, dried pet food, etc. You may see adults flying throughout the house, larvae crawling on pantry shelves or in packages along with their silk webbing. Discard the source of the infestation and clean all jars and containers that are affected. Store foods in insect proof containers. Always check bulk foods prior to purchase for signs of meal moth infestation. There is no need to use insecticides to control these pests.
- Grain mites are minute, 8 legged creatures that are light colored and resemble dust. They often feed on dry pet foods and treats and may come into the home on any type of milled food product. Discard infested products and vacuum and clean the area around the infestation with soapy water.
- Many hibernating insects wake up during spells of mild weather in February. Elm leaf beetle, leaf-footed bugs, Asian ladybird beetles, boxelder bugs, cluster flies, stink bugs and other species may appear both outdoors and indoors in large numbers. Although a nuisance indoors they are all harmless and can be vacuumed or swept up. Prevent the entry of these invaders by sealing up all small holes and cracks around the outside of your home. No chemical controls are recommended.

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- Cluster flies resemble large houseflies and may appear around windows and lamps throughout winter but become more active in February. During the winter they hibernate in attics or wall voids and become active on warm, sunny days. They are sluggish flyers and do not eat garbage. Prevent their entry by sealing up all small holes and cracks around the outside of your home.
- By this time in the winter ants may start appearing in the house. The largest is the carpenter ant which is attracted to water soaked wood found in bathrooms, kitchens and sometime attics. The smallest and most common household ant is the small black pavement ant. In most cases bait stations work well to control minor infestations.
- To learn more about the household insect pests listed above refer to the collection of fact sheets on them available from the HGIC.

**Have a pest or gardening question?**  
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