

A POTENTIAL FOR A BUG BOOM IS ALWAYS THERE

Insects are chewing, piercing, sucking, lapping, and in general munching and crunching their way through a variety of plant and animal life at this time of the year.

It appears that insect populations have exploded this year, but actually, there's really no way of taking an insect census. However, we are witnessing grasshopper outbreaks in the western areas of the United States and Africa, Japanese beetle hordes in eastern half of the U.S., and in Chicago, the mosquitoes are about ready to drive people crazy. It's difficult to enjoy an evening outside without slapping yourself silly.

Where do all these insects come from? There is no doubt that the great reproductive capacity of the insect is what makes them so successful. Research literature reports that Illinois forest soils to a depth of 18 inches shows an average frequency of 65 million insects to the acre. From extensive trapping experiments estimated is an average insect population of about 1.85 million per square mile in the morning and about 11,000 per acre or 7 million per square mile in the evening.

Now, if you compare this to other animals on the earth's surface, there is an average of one person for each 16 acres of dry land, two horses, mules, cows, sheep, hogs, and chickens combined per acre of land in the U.S., and an average of three birds per acre in Illinois fields during the summer months.

Aside from the insects' great reproductive powers, their size, strength, adaptability, and persistence to complete work all add greatly to their overall success. More than 70 of all the animal species in the world are insects. In fact, if you took all the insects in the world and placed them on one side of a scale and placed all of the other animal matter on the earth on the other side, the insects would outweigh all other animal matter combined.

So, when someone asks, "Why the great surge of insect pests this year?" ... the answer is easy. The potential for overly abundant insect population is always there.

The environmental conditions dictate how many. Insects love higher temperatures and humidities coupled with plenty of rain water. Add an abundant food supply of lush, green foliage or an adequate animal population to feed off, depending on the insect species, and you have all the right ingredients for plenty of bugs.

Chicago-area residents this year have been faced with mosquitoes, bees, wasps, aphids, ground beetles, flies, cottony maple scale, bagworms, grub, caterpillars, vine weevils, and the like. Don't think it ends with the cold weather either, your indoor friends will be cuddling up with you this winter—cockroaches, ants, drain flies, pantry pests, crickets, silverfish, termites, and spiders.

Pest-aside
By Stanley Rachesky

To comprehend a man's life, it is necessary to know not merely what he does, but also what he purposely leaves undone. There is a limit to the work that can be got out of a human body or a human brain, and he is a wise man who wastes no energy on pursuits for which he is not fitted; and he is still wiser who, from among the things that he can do well, chooses and resolutely follows the best.

William Gladstone



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...may have been all right once, but it's gone on too long.

Ogden Nash