

SPARING THE PLANET OF PESTS AND DISEASE

There was a time when pest-borne diseases — malaria, yellow fever and typhus — were feared by every American.

There was a time when nearly one-fourth of Europe's population was wiped out by bubonic plague. There was a time when the constant biting of bed bugs prevented a good night's sleep.

Before widespread mosquito control, as recently as 1935, 4,000 Americans a year died of malaria. Further back, during the summer of 1878, a yellow fever epidemic affected 132 U.S. cities and 75,000 Americans. Of those, 16,000 people died of the mosquito-carried disease.



Close inspection inside a structure leads the pest control operator to actual and potential problems. Early identification of a termite infestation can save the homeowner money and headaches. It's estimated termites and carpenter ants cause \$2.5 billion in structural damage annually worldwide.



And it was in 1845 that the Honorable John Randolph addressed Congress and declared that Florida would never be developed nor would it ever be a fit place to live. He described Florida, one of today's most popular tourist destinations, as "a land of swamps or quagmires of frogs and alligators and mosquitoes."

Today, we live in a country where plagues and epidemics are a vague memory. "Americans no longer worry about getting malaria, yellow fever or dengue fever," says Norman Cooper of the National Pest Control Association. Once common and greatly feared problems in America, these diseases were transmitted to humans by insects and rodents.

D I D Y O U K N O W ?

Few Americans worry about health threats posed by insects. That's because pest populations are held in check by pest-management programs, which include responsible use of specialty pesticides. A pest-free living environment:

- Wards off disease. Pests, such as mosquitoes, no longer pose the disease threats of the past, when whole cities and nations were wracked by outbreaks of malaria, yellow fever and typhus.
- Allows the public to enjoy outdoor recreation. Some of today's popular tourist destinations, such as Florida and other tropical locales, once were seen as unfit places for humans to live or visit. Pest control cleared the way for development and commercialization of recreational facilities.
- Protects the food supply. Without pest control, rodents and insects would dine on much of the food meant for human consumption.
- Enhances property values. Homes and offices, free from wood-infesting and other pests, enjoy a longer life span and maintain more of their original value.

"Fortunately, we no longer must fear pest-borne diseases — not only because of great advances in modern medicine but because of modern pest control, too," Cooper says.

Even President George Bush recognizes the important role the pest control industry plays in protecting public health and property. In a letter recognizing National Pest Control Month, he wrote: "We Americans have come to expect pest-free homes, places of employment and food supplies. Yet we know that we could not enjoy living in a clean, healthy environment if it were not for the efforts of pest control professionals."

PAYOFFS FOR THE PUBLIC

The payoff for this commitment to pest control and public health programs is a dramatic increase in life expectancy. In 1940, the average American lived to age 63. Today, the average American lives to age 75.

Unfortunately, the media has been slow to spread a positive message to the public. "The overwhelming majority of the news we get from radio, television and print media about health and the environment is bad news...despite the fact that national health statistics indicate we have never been healthier," says Dr. Elizabeth Whelan of the American Council on Science and Health, a consumer education and advocacy group.



Pest control operators and technicians take time to review problem spots with homeowners and business operators.

The control and monitoring of public health pests through integrated pest management (IPM), including the use of specialty chemicals, is a key reason for America's improved health. Pest control professionals keep fleas, ticks, cockroaches, rats and other pests from reproducing in large numbers. But it's a constant battle. Consider these statistics:

- Rats bite more than 45,000 people annually, mostly infants and children.

- Seven to eight percent of the U.S. population is allergic to cockroaches. Studies of inner-city children in Atlanta with chronic wheezing, runny eyes and noses revealed that 44 percent were allergic to cockroaches.

- Rodents are responsible for, or implicated in, the spread of numerous diseases, including plague, acute food poisoning, rat-bite fever and typhus.

- Lyme disease, transmitted to humans by the deer tick, infects thousands of Americans annually — and the numbers are rising.

- Cockroaches transmit a variety of digestive tract disorders, including food poisoning, dysentery and diarrhea.

- Mosquitoes are prime carriers of several types of encephalitis, a devastating illness that attacks the central nervous system of humans.



Precise application of specialty pesticides keeps living environments pest-free.

continued on following page

PEST CONTROL

ENVIRONMENTAL DAMAGE

Public health isn't all that suffers when pests reproduce in large numbers. Wood-destroying insects, including termites and carpenter ants, cause nearly \$2.5 billion in structural damage annually. In the United States alone, termites cause an estimated \$800 million worth of damage to more than 600,000 structures.

And termites aren't the only villains. Rodents eat or contaminate millions of dollars of food daily. The National Pest Control Association



Americans largely take a pest-free home for granted. Specialty pesticides have eliminated the threat of many diseases that wracked humans in decades past.

estimates a single rat in the United States may contaminate up to \$1,000 worth of food annually. Worldwide, experts estimate rats and mice destroy enough food each year to feed 200 million people! By damaging electrical wiring, rats are suspected of causing up to 25 percent of all fires of unknown origin.

Fully one-fifth of all U.S. households have had a pest problem in the past year. Yet, despite the risk of disease and structural damage, many Americans still fear the use of specialty pesticides to control pests. Why? Experts say the general public doesn't understand the relationship between benefits and risks.

Part of the reason for the pesticide phobia, says former U.S. Surgeon General Dr. C. Everett Koop, is "the public doesn't have a very good grasp of the relationship between the dose of a toxic substance and its risk in human beings." Information often comes from those who use scare tactics rather than science when warning the public.

But the truth is hard to deny. Professional pest management programs improve the nation's standard of living. Widespread outbreaks of yellow fever, malaria and similar maladies — plagues that once swept the nation and the globe — have thankfully been committed to the history books.

BUG OFF

SPECIALTY PESTICIDES LESSEN THREATS TO HUMAN HEALTH

While the threat to human health from harmful insects has been greatly reduced, it hasn't disappeared. Insects and other pests pose many common and not-so-common health problems. Each of the following problems can be and is being controlled through efficient and effective pest control methods, including use of specialty pesticides.

Ants	Bite and sting Infest stored food
Bats	Associated with rabies, histoplasmosis and other diseases
Bees	Bite and sting Infest stored food
Beetles	Infest stored food Cause dermatitis
Cockroaches	Cause food poisoning Associated with gastroenteritis, dysentery, allergies and skin infections
Fleas	Cause dermatitis Transmit plague, typhus and tapeworm
Flies	Transmit typhoid, cholera, dysentery, infantile diarrhea, tularemia and other diseases Some species bite
Hornets	Bite and sting Infest stored food
Lice	Cause dermatitis Transmit epidemic typhus, trench fever and relapsing fever
Mites	Can cause dermatitis Transmit rickettsialpox and hemorrhagic fever
Mosquitoes	Transmit malaria, encephalitis, yellow fever and dengue fever
Nuisance birds	Associated with histoplasmosis, ornithosis and other diseases
Rodents	Bite Transmit leptospirosis and lymphatic choriomeningitis
Ticks	Transmit Lyme disease, Rocky Mountain spotted fever and tularemia
Wasps	Bite and sting Infest stored food

Source: National Pest Control Association