

# Crickets are destructive pests indoors

NEWARK, Del. — Watching crickets fight each other is an ancient oriental sport. In this country, the fight is between the homemaker and the cricket. And it's not a sport; it's war.

A cricket indoors is a noisy, destructive pest, says University of Delaware Extension entomologist Frank Boys. Although they're not likely to chew synthetic fabrics, they

damage cottons, woolens, silks and other natural fibers — especially if the materials are even slightly dirty.

Delawareans will probably hear a good deal of cricket chirping this Fall.

Boys says numbers are way up among these noisy fiddlers, and some are already finding their way indoors. As cooler weather arrives, the invasion will probably pick up. They're attracted by

lights and get into houses through cracks, windowsills, and doors.

In Delaware the two most common crickets that invade houses are the field cricket and the house cricket. The field cricket is usually dark brown to black, lives in grassy places, and feeds on plant material. The house cricket is yellowish-brown with three dark bands on the body region behind its head. Generally found in garbage or refuse dumps, it will feed on almost any organic refuse. It may overwinter as an adult in buildings and can be active all year round.

Both kinds of cricket are bad news inside the house. The amount of damage they do depends on how many are present and how long they're active. But, warns Boys, large numbers of field and house crickets may do severe damage in a single night.

Control measures for this destructive pest include both chemical and non-chemical means. Since crickets are most troublesome in dwellings near grassy areas, city dumps and other refuse areas, one should eliminate weeds and dense vegetation around the foundation of your house. Also get rid of any rotting wood, stones, bricks, tile, and other debris where crickets might hide.

A person should take steps to caulk or fill in cracks and other possible points of entry into the house, and keep a fly swatter handy for those individuals which do manage to break through the security system.

If cricket populations are

large, one may also need to resort to chemical controls.

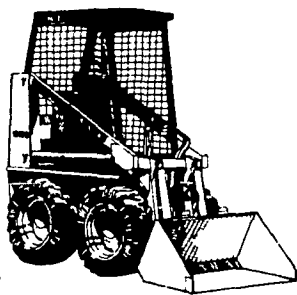
Indoors there are a number of convenient ready-to-use solutions or aerosols to choose from, including chlorpyrifos (Dursban), diazinon, or premium-grade malathion. A person can apply these sprays along baseboards, in closets, under stairways, around fireplaces, in basements, on ground level floors and wherever else crickets become a nuisance.

Outside, one can spray foundation walls, window wells, sub-floor crawl spaces, under garbage cans, door thresholds, and other points of entry or possible hiding places. A person should apply Dursban at the rate recommended for lawn pests, or use diazinon 25 percent EC at the concentration listed on the label for nuisance pests. (One should take care, though, not to use this concentration on plants or in the house.) If necessary, one can reapply any of these materials at one to two week intervals.

When infestations are very heavy, a person may need to treat a five to 10 foot wide band of the soil adjacent to and surrounding the foundation of the house.

Caution. Some liquid insecticides may leave undesirable residues or stains on certain exterior wall surfaces. They may also burn young, tender plants. Also, the solvents in certain insecticides may damage textiles, vinyl tile flooring, and other household surfaces.

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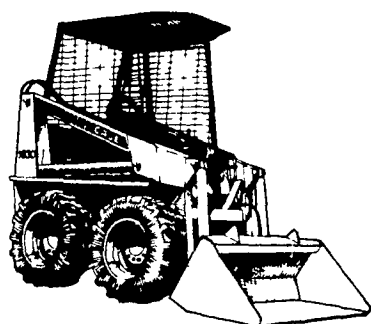


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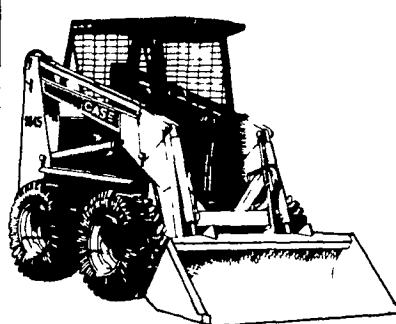


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