

Don't Let Firewood Insects Bug You

COLUMBUS, Ohio — A 3-inch bug crawling from firewood you brought into your house may sound scary, but insects that hitchhike on firewood into homes are usually harmless, said Ohio State University Extension entomologist Bill Lyon.

"For the most part, firewood insects are a nuisance only by their presence and cause no harm to the home, household furnishings or humans," Lyons said.

Wood can quickly warm a cold room, but it can also serve as a home for nuisance insects. People become alarmed when they notice sawdust pushed out of firewood, hear faint rustling or gnawing noises, and see insects crawl or fly out of woodpiles, he said.

Beetles of all shapes and sizes that bore into wood to eat and lay their eggs are common firewood insects. Some are drab, while others are metallic or brightly colored. The beetles can be as short as one-sixteenth or as long as 3 inches. However, only two of the many beetle varieties will infest structural or interior wood in the house. Most wood-infesting beetles will not reinfest wood that is painted, varnished, waxed or shellacked.

Carpenter ants and termites can inhabit wet firewood stacked on the ground outside. But bringing in these insects with firewood usually will not cause infestations in the house.

"Both are social insects, and the colony becomes so disturbed when the wood is moved, dried or split that establishment indoors is very

unlikely," Lyon said. "However, wood stored in damp, moist basements or stacked on the ground outside against the house for several seasons should be avoided."

Other pests that may be attracted to firewood include sowbugs, pillbugs, millipedes, centipedes, spiders, cockroaches, crickets, earwigs, and flies.

Sometimes, yellowjacket wasps, paper wasps and bumble bees build nests in firewood piles, which could be dangerous to people moving or stacking firewood. Their queens may overwinter under firewood bark and emerge early to fly within the house when wood is stored in the warm indoors, he said.

Lyon offers these tips to keep nuisance insects out of the house:

- Store firewood outdoors in an open area, as far away from the house as practical, to keep away insects and debris.
- Stack firewood off the ground to eliminate serious soil moisture problems that lead to wood rot and pest problems. Stacking firewood in loose piles raised off the ground, and splitting or sawing wood into smaller sizes, speeds drying.
- Cover wood with dark polyurethane plastic or sheet metal to keep it dry. During the summertime, the area under the plastic will build up heat, evaporating moisture and killing various stages of insects and other pests within.
- Burn firewood brought indoors immediately. Firewood stored inside more than an hour may warm up enough for insects to emerge from within or under bark

and start their spring activities early.

• Try not to save large quantities of firewood from season to season. After one to two seasons, unprotected wood left outside on the ground will become tunneled from many woodboring insects, develop loose bark where nuisance insects can take shelter and decrease in heat value from wood-decaying fungi.

• Trees cut from April to October and left stacked in the woods are very likely to become infested.

Always remove logs from the forest to reduce insect attacks.

• The sooner the wood is split, the quicker it will dry and become less subject to insect infestations. Unsplit wood with the bark left on is very attractive to wood destroying insects.

If firewood is infested by insects, it is not safe or effective to treat it with pesticides, Lyon said. Spray treatments applied to the firewood surface will not kill woodborers within and burning insecticide-treated firewood indoors could

cause a potential health hazard from the toxic chemical fumes released into the air.

"Any beetles or other insects appearing inside the house can simply be picked up with a vacuum cleaner or broom and dustpan and discarded," he said.

For more information about firewood insects, call your local office of Ohio State University Extension and ask for Extension Factsheets HYG-2065-96 and HYG-2127-94.

Sanders Named Conservation Grants Program Manager

ANNAPOLIS, Md. — Maryland Department of Agriculture Secretary Lewis Riley has announced the appointment of Edward A. Sanders as conservation grants program manager in the office of resource conservation. Sanders formerly worked as a conservation specialist with the conservation grants program.

In his new position as program manger, Sanders will work closely with the state's 24 soil conservation districts to implement the Maryland Agricultural Water Quality Cost-Share Program (MACS). Under the MACS program, farmers receive up to 87.5 percent of the cost to install certain agricultural best management practices to control soil erosion, manage nutrients and protect water quality.

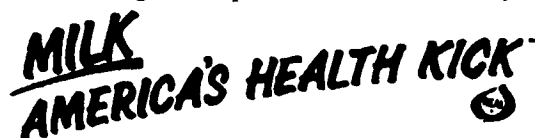
Sanders will supervise the cost-share grant application process and oversee the development of grant arrangements between MDA, soil conservation districts and landowners.

Additional duties will involve cost-share oversight for the state Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program. This program provides payments to farmers who convert certain environmentally-sensitive lands into conservation cover, vegetative buffers, or riparian forests.

"We are pleased to have Ed at the helm of our Conservation Grants team," said Riley. "Because of his technical background, Ed brings unique

insight based on practical experience into the special challenges Maryland farmers face in protecting our natural resources while maintaining a profitable farm. I'm confident he'll do a great job for both agriculture and the environment."

Sanders has worked for MDA's Office of Resource Conservation for just over a decade serving as a soil conservation technician and planner in the Carroll Soil Conservation District office. Prior to joining MDA, he worked for six years as a full time farmer at a dairy and grain operation in Taneytown. He attended Millersville State College in Pennsylvania.



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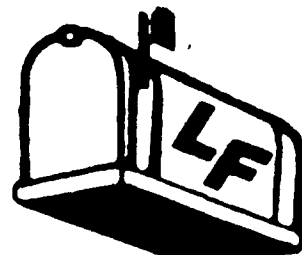
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