



## Help Prevent Rabies Near Your Home

**A**ny mammal may become infected with the rabies virus ... including humans. The disease can be spread by infected bats, raccoons, foxes, skunks, wolves, dogs and other animals found in your neighborhood. Take the following precautions to stay safe this winter:

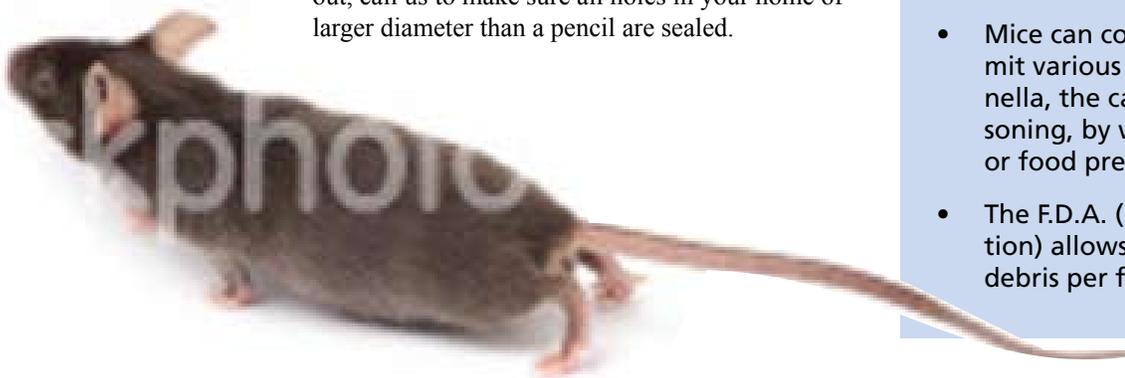
- Do not handle sick or injured wild animals yourself; call Animal Control. If you must handle a dead animal, use heavy gloves, sticks, or other tools to avoid direct contact with saliva.
- Bats found inside your home, alive or dead, should be tested for rabies — even if there was no known contact with the bat.
- Make sure pets are **vaccinated against rabies**. By law, *all* dogs *and* cats must be vaccinated.

- Fasten trashcan lids tightly to keep animals out.
- Teach children to keep a safe distance from wild animals, strays, and all animals they don't know well, even if the animal acts friendly.
- Keep pets confined to your property to lessen the chances of them contacting a wild animal. *It is against the law* to allow your dog to roam free. If your pet gets in a fight with another animal, wear protective gloves while handling the pet. Contact your veterinarian.
- *Do not keep* wild animals as pets. There are no approved rabies vaccines for wild animals.
- If you are bitten or scratched by an unfamiliar animal, call your doctor, public health department or pest professional for advice. ■

(Source: [cdc.gov](http://cdc.gov))

## Don't Let a Mouse in Your House

**T**he house mouse is the most common rodent pest in most parts of the world. It can breed rapidly and adapt quickly to changing conditions. Mice can squeeze through spaces as small as a nickel. To keep mice and other rodents out, call us to make sure all holes in your home of larger diameter than a pencil are sealed.



### DID YOU KNOW?

- Mice are the number one cause of unexplained fires because of their tendency to gnaw on wires?
- Mice can contaminate food and transmit various pathogens, such as Salmonella, the causative agent of food poisoning, by walking across various foods or food preparation surfaces?
- The F.D.A. (Food and Drug Administration) allows a certain number of mouse debris per food item?

# Cluster Flies

**C**luster flies are, by far, the most common fly found in homes during the colder winter months. They can sometimes be serious nuisance problems, particularly in taller buildings where they tend to concentrate on upper stories on the southwest sunny sides. Cluster flies are large and dark gray and will spend winter in attics and voids. On warm sunny winter days they will come out and fly toward lights, where you often will find them in windowsills.

Cluster flies are actually a type of blow fly, but have very different habits. They develop as parasites of earthworms and are *not* associated with garbage, animal wastes, or unsanitary conditions. Instead, this fly requires a shelter during winter to keep warm, and your home provides the perfect place. Flies that are present in late summer/early fall seek winter shelter and they survive winters as a semi-dormant adult fly. Cluster flies do not feed nor



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photo: [pep.wsu.edu/pestsense/images/Large/ClusterFly.jpg](http://pep.wsu.edu/pestsense/images/Large/ClusterFly.jpg)

reproduce within buildings, but, on those warmer sunny days you will see them in great numbers and this can cause alarm and be quite a nuisance for most homeowners. Call us to help you with your cluster fly issues. We can identify areas where they may be coming inside of your home and make suggestions for getting rid of them especially before the multiply in great numbers. ■

# Merchant Grain Beetles

**M**erchant grain beetles are typically not found in grain products, but instead like to attack cereals, cake mixes, macaroni, cookies and chocolate.

Merchant grain beetles are dark brown and have six saw-like teeth on each side of their bodies. They can grow to be one-eighth of an inch long and have very flat bodies. The merchant grain beetle's body shape allows it to crawl into packaging to

eat, live and have young. Merchant grain beetles are found in pantries or in food processing areas or warehouses. Merchant grain beetles can infest stored food products and can contaminate food.

Call us to help identify infested stored products and any pests. Work with us to discard any infested packages and to clean spilled grain and food. We can treat areas affected by the beetles to ensure they are eliminated. ■

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photo: Harold Harlan



# ARE THERE **BATS** IN YOUR BELFRY?

**T**wo kinds of bats are often found roosting in colonies inside buildings, the big brown and little brown bats. The **big brown bat** is a large bat with a wingspread of about 14" and is very common. Colonies of up to 200 individuals will return each spring to thousands of homes and other buildings where they have roosted previously. Although their live spans are long, reproduction is slow and only one or two young are born each year. If left undisturbed, a colony of bats will return to the same roost each spring for many years.

The big brown bat accounts for more than 75 percent of the bat contacts with people and pets and is the one most often tested for rabies. The **little brown bat** can also be found in homes during the spring and summer, and large numbers hibernate in abandoned mines. Little browns seem to prefer open roosting areas such as rake-boards, gable-vents, barns and attics without insulation. Little browns are rarely found inside the living space of houses and are much louder than big browns. Little browns are also very sociable and squeak loudly, especially when in large groups.

Bats often roost in dark and undisturbed areas, such as attics and wall voids. Entry points are usually found near a roof edge, such as under the eaves, soffits, or openings in the roof or vents, or cracks around a chimney. Sometimes bats will roost behind window shutters or other exterior areas without entering the home. Sometimes the only evidence of the presence of bats in a building (other than squeaking noises) will be an accumulation of droppings in one particular area. Bat droppings in general will look a lot like house mouse droppings in both size and shape, but will have many shiny particles housed within them. These are the undigested cuticles of insects, a major portion of a bat's diet.

Bats are not normally aggressive animals. However, caution should be used to avoid direct contact, even with apparently healthy bats. In recent years, bat associated strains of rabies have been the causative agent for the majority of the few human rabies cases in the United States. If you are bitten or scratched or the possibility of contact cannot be ruled out, **immediately cleanse any wounds** thoroughly with soap and water, and **seek prompt medical attention** from a physician or hospital emergency room.

The only method to get rid of bats from a structure and keep them out permanently is through exclusion by bat-proofing. We can provide you with assistance, so **do not attempt this yourself!** ■



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***Little brown bats** are rarely found inside houses; they prefer open roosting areas.*

# Lady Bird Beetles



Lady bird beetles, *aka* lady bugs or lady beetles, are generally considered beneficial insects, and in fact, you can often buy them at the local garden store for use in your own garden. They have voracious appetites for aphids and other pests of garden plants, so gardeners will happily release them into their gardens in the summer as a *green* pest management option.

The problem lies in the need for some species of ladybugs to spend winter in a protected structure, *like your home!* (The native lady beetle does not require a structure, but the multicolored Asian lady beetle, an exotic pest, does.) As summer ends and temperatures cool, in move the lady beetles! You often find them congregating in great numbers on the sunny southwest side of a building. They slowly find their way into structures under eaves and siding, through cracks and around screens. Soon, you are sharing your living space with ladybeetles; sometimes *thousands* of them! Of course, you may not see them immediately. They usually head for the dark void areas behind walls and in attic and crawlspaces to spend their winter vacation. It's on those sunny, warmer winter days that suddenly your living space, especially around windows and doors, becomes inundated with these creatures.

Adult Asian lady beetles are oval, convex, and about 1/4-inch long. Their color can vary widely from light orange to red. They often have several black spots on the wing covers, although on some spots may be indistinct or absent. Multi-

spotted individuals tend to be females while those with few or no spots tend to be males. Most beetles have a small, dark "M"-shaped marking on the whitish area behind the head. Individual beetles can live up to three years.

Lady beetles are a nuisance, can bite, emit an odor, and can stain some surfaces with a yellow secretion they produce. Some people also have asthmatic reactions and are allergic to their shed skins. Once inside, it is easiest to remove them by vacuuming. After you've vacuumed, remove the vacuum bag and put it in the freezer to kill the contained ladybugs.

Sealing cracks and crevices is a permanent way to prevent them from entering a building. Pay special attention to areas such as cracks around windows, doors, soffits, fascia boards, utility conduit openings, etc. These can all become common entry points for the beetles. Door sweeps and weather stripping can close gaps below doorways and other entry points.

Don't hesitate to give us a call; we can make recommendations and take steps to eliminate your lady beetle problem. After we conduct a thorough inspection and identify the entry points, we can also target treat these areas and the exterior to prevent beetles from entering; (these treatments are best done in the fall months). Once beetles have infested your home, we can provide you some temporary relief with vacuuming, light traps and void treatments. Hopefully, this will allow you to enjoy a pest-free winter. ■

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*On warm winter days, your living space, especially around windows and doors, can become inundated with these creatures.*

