

Avoid Insect Invaders in Your Home This Winter

How to identify six-legged stowaways during the cold season

Bears aren't the only animals who hibernate for the winter. Many bugs take a timeout during the cold season as well, through a process called "overwintering." Given that a typical backyard contains 1,000 or more different insect species, there are plenty of potential house guests (or should we say, "house pests") lining up at your door each fall.

Unlike bears, however, certain critters - especially insects like stink bugs, ladybugs, boxelder bugs and wasps, among others - prefer to bed down in your nice warm home. And they don't make for ideal bunkmates.

You need a game plan...

So how do you identify these insect invaders? When should you expect them to show up? And where do the critters tend to congregate once inside your home?

- Common autumn pest invaders in North Carolina include boxelder bugs, kudzu bugs, ladybugs, leaf-footed bugs and especially stink bugs. Cluster flies and social wasps, like hornets and paper wasps, are other common culprits.
- Some estimates say there are 10 quintillion (10,000,000,000,000,000,000) individual insects on Earth at any given time.
- Insects can adapt to the cold in many ways, including using antifreeze - the same compound (ethylene glycol) used in vehicles - to supercool their bodies until spring.
- Insect invaders like to "crawl up" in homes and may enter on a lower level, but they often end up settling in an attic.
- Many overwintering insects can survive a mild winter since they're equipped to withstand much colder temperatures, so be prepared for a home invader exodus at the start of spring!
- Learn more about common insects, some of which are beneficial to natural habitats, and how to control for them in the North Carolina Extension Gardener Handbook at content.ces.ncsu.edu/extension-gardener-handbook/4-insects.

Pines Don't Lose Leaves in the Fall...Or Do They?



Everyone knows that autumn is the time for trees to turn colors and lose their leaves. Thousands of families pack their cars and drive out to the country to see colorful hardwood foliage as trees prepare for winter. But, what about the pines? After all, they are evergreens and evergreens are always green, right? Not exactly. Leaves of pines (we call them needles) turn colors and drop in the fall.

For most of the year, when a pine turns yellow, it's a sign that something is wrong with the tree. In the fall, it's a different story. Concerned their trees are dying, homeowners and forest landowners with yellowing pines often call foresters and tree care experts this time of year. When told it is just fall color, tree experts often hear a common skeptical reply, "But pines are evergreen - they don't turn colors."

Both the experts and the concerned callers are correct. To understand this, consider that needles on pine trees in North Carolina usually live for two growing seasons. During the second growing season, needles become shaded and require more maintenance as they age. So, like deciduous hardwood trees, pines will quit maintaining these older, less efficient needles and cut them loose.

Green needles are ones that emerged this past spring. Yellow needles are a year older and are shaded by the green leaves.

When looking at pines this fall, you will see that most have both yellow and green needles. A closer look will reveal that the yellow needles, last year's needles, are closer to the trunk. The green ones, this year's needles, are closer to the branch tips. It looks like this tree is dying, but new green leaves can be seen at the tips of all the branches.

After a windy day or a wind event, you may find a blanket of yellow needles covering the ground beneath your pines and a fresh blanket of green needles covering branches with color and smell, reminding you that it's almost time to buy a North Carolina Christmas tree.

Don't worry about your pines running out of needles. While only one flush of leaves will be present in the winter, a new flush will emerge next spring so there will always be two flushes of needles going into the growing season.

Now, if you see a tree with all its needles turning yellow this time of year, it is either trying to impress its hardwood neighbors or it is time to call a pine doctor who makes house calls.

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* All events are subject to change because of the COVID-19 situation. You may want to seek confirmation of events.

Church News

ONGOING

HOPE Grief Support Group at Harmony Community Church, meets Tuesdays at 6:30pm offering help for those feeling grief or loss. Free & confidential. Info & register 704-272-7127 or 704-242-2499. Located at 1984 Pulpwood Yard Rd in Peachland

Service Times Wadesboro Church of God. Sunday School 10am, morning worship 11am, Intercessory prayer 5:45pm, evening service 6pm

Events

JANUARY 6

Free Groceries

For families in need Mobile Food Pantry at Austin Grove Baptist Church, located at 5919 Austin Grove Church Road in Marshville. Register 8-10am. Call for details 704-694-2445

ONGOING EVENTS

ACDVC One on One Call us to meet & discuss how to keep you & your children safe. Anson County Domestic Violence Coalition 704-694-4499

Food Pantry Free food every Wed, 9-11am at Burnsville Recreation & Learning Ctr. 704-826-8182

Anson County Board of Commissioners Monthly Meetings are held the first Tuesday of the month at 6pm in Board Rm (Suite 209) of Government Bldg, 101 S. Greene St in Wadesboro. Info 704-994-3201

Direct and Counter Cyclical Program Sign-ups

Call the Farm Service Agency Office at 704-694-3516 ext. 2 to complete eligibility forms

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Help is on the Way. But First We Have to Dig Deep

Op-Ed from NC Governor Roy Cooper: When I announced North Carolina had its first known COVID case on March 3rd, most of us didn't expect to be living like this in December. Instead of preparing for beloved holiday traditions, we're making virtual gathering plans and mourning the loss of more than 290,000 Americans from COVID-19. As tough as this is, especially at the holidays, the sacrifices we're making now will ensure that our loved ones can gather again at next year's Thanksgiving and Christmas tables.

Our COVID-19 numbers are dire, and we need North Carolinians to take this virus seriously. A month ago, daily case counts above 3,000 were troubling. Recently, we've had several days with more than 6,000 new daily cases. Hospitals and health care workers are feeling the strain. More than 80% of North Carolina counties have been designated as red or orange, meaning their community spread is way too high.

Until vaccines are widely available, we have a few tools that we know can keep people safe while also boosting our economy — wearing our masks, staying socially distant and keeping any gatherings small and outdoors, or better yet, online.

We have put in place a new, modified Stay at Home Order that requires people to be home between the hours of 10 pm and 5 am. This builds on strong safety protocols like the mask requirement and capacity limits we already have in place, and we will continue watching our trends to see if more is needed.

We don't want to implement tighter restrictions. Too many small businesses and families are struggling to make ends meet as it is. They need significantly more financial support from the federal government, and I've repeatedly urged Congress and the President to pass a stimulus package that helps families and businesses before 2020 ends.

But our top priority will always be saving lives. We'll do what's necessary to protect North Carolinians and make sure anyone who needs a hospital or ICU bed gets one, whether it's to treat COVID or a heart attack.

Advances in vaccine technology and concentrated efforts by our scientists have given us hope that new vaccines will get us to the other side of this pandemic.

North Carolina's Department of Health and Human Services has been working hard for months to develop a vaccine distribution plan so we can hit the ground running once vaccines arrive. Quantities will be limited at first, but trusted hospitals and health care providers will be ready to vaccinate priority populations — those who are at-risk of exposure like health care workers and North Carolinians at risk of severe illness.

I have confidence in this process and plan to roll up my sleeve when it's my turn to get the vaccine. But for now, we have to work together and tap into the resiliency that defines our state. Whether it's helping our neighbors rebuild after a hurricane or coming together to support our loved ones who are most vulnerable to this virus, North Carolinians are best at looking out for each other when times are tough.

That spirit is still in us, no matter how tired or frustrated we are. Dig deep and don't let weariness win. Together we will beat this thing.

Rapid Testing Available at Anson Regional Medical Services (ARMS)

Anson Regional Medical Services, Inc. (ARMS) finally received COVID-19 Rapid Testing Equipment (ordered in May) and will provide drive-through testing each week BY APPOINTMENT ONLY:

Location:

203 Salisbury Street in Wadesboro
Parking Lot

Monday, Wednesday and Thursday
9am to 11:45am & 1:15pm - 3:15pm

Call 704-694-6700 for an appointment

Patients will need to remain in their cars. Paperwork will be required. The entire process, including testing, post-test instrumentation and contact trace information will take a minimum of 30 minutes per person.

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