

PestGazette

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Aphids Might Be Feeding Ants Around Your Home

Aphids are small insects you may see around your home on plants. They feed on plant sap and then secrete a sticky, sugary substance as they feed called honeydew. Many ants love this sugary substance and will readily feed on honeydew. The ants love honeydew so much that they have learned over time to farm aphids by herding them around as well as take care of them. In turn, the aphids get much needed protection by the ants from other predators that may eat them, so they don't mind being bossed around by ants on their plant turf.

Aphids can provide a plentiful source of food that can help sustain ant populations around the home. By controlling ants, aphid populations will begin to plummet and reduce the amount of damage they can do to beautiful plants and gardens. If you see ant activity around your home, it may be time to give us a call to evaluate any food sources or conditions that may be supporting an abundance of ants. □

Call Today
401-738-3766



Why Wearing Repellent is Important

The best way to protect your family from tick and mosquito bites is to stop bites before they happen! Personally applied repellents have a long history of effectiveness. Repellents are most often used to protect people from ticks and mosquitoes, which are both very serious threats to public health because of their potential to spread disease.

There are many species of ticks found in North America that can transmit disease to humans via bites including Rocky Mountain spotted fever, Heartland virus, relapsing fever, and others. Lyme disease, transmitted by the blacklegged, or deer tick, is certainly the biggest concern and most common tick-borne disease in North America.

Fortunately, most of the serious mosquito transmitted diseases present in the world are not a problem in North America. Though we don't have to worry about malaria or yellow fever, there are other diseases transmitted by mosquitoes in the United States. West Nile virus attracts the most attention, but St. Louis encephalitis, Eastern (and Western) equine encephalitis, dengue, chickungunya and other mosquito-borne diseases do occur in the United States.

It's always best to play it safe and protect yourself and your family when you know mosquitoes are out and about! Be sure when choosing a repellent that you opt for one that is registered by the Environmental Protection Agency because they have been vetted for safety and effectiveness. Some options approved are DEET, Picaridin, IR3535, Oil of lemon eucalyptus, Para-menthane-diol and 2-undecanone. Look for these ingredients on the bottle when selecting a repellent and follow the directions on the label for proper application. If you are noticing ticks and mosquitoes around your home, please give us a call and we will help protect your and your family from pesky, and potentially dangerous, unwanted bites. □

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That's not a flea, it's A SPRINGTAIL!



Springtails thrive in warm, wet conditions brought on by spring weather. These tiny insects typically live in moist soil and are excellent "jumpers". Though it does seem like they are jumping, they actually use a small appendage on their tail end to vault themselves into the air, sometimes as high as 4 inches! This appendage is unique to springtails and helps these little critters vault away from threats. Fleas, on the other hand, use their supersized hind leg muscles to leap. Adult cat fleas (the most common infesting flea) are noticeably bigger than most springtails. When it comes to choosing between the lesser of two evils, springtails come out on top of the bloodsucking fleas. Springtails do not bite or sting and are harmless to people. However, because springtails also jump they can be confused with fleas, especially when they become a major nuisance pest indoors.

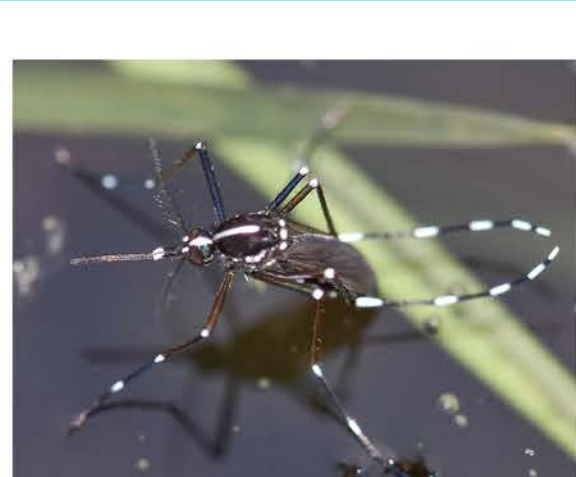
Springtails are present year-round, but populations typically spike in early spring where they can overflow into your pool, patio or even into your home. Springtails feed on decaying plant matter and are often found in association with their food sources: fungi, damp soil, and around decaying wood. Unfortunately, they also thrive in places with excess moisture, especially in mulch and leaf litter that often surrounds houses, downspouts, and around air conditioning drain lines. [Next page](#) ▶

How Rainy Weather Impacts Mosquitoes

Amosquitoes need water to lay eggs and for their young to develop. Increased rain creating areas of standing water on warm spring days means there will be more mosquitoes. Many of the mosquito species that transmit disease require very little standing water to lay their eggs, with as little as an 1/2 inch of water required for breeding.

Reducing moisture and standing water around the home is very important to control mosquitoes. The removal of water means there will be fewer areas for mosquitoes to breed and develop. Any container that could potentially hold water around the yard should be checked for mosquito larvae.

Dumping containers in your backyard that can hold water, such as kiddie pools, bird baths, flowerpots, and numerous other household items, can greatly reduce container-breeding mosquitoes. Not only should you turn items over that can hold water, you should also scrub the inside of containers. Female mosquitoes secrete a sticky substance onto eggs when she lays them so they will stick to the surface and can't be removed by simply inverting a container upside down. Once the container refills with water, the eggs will continue to develop into flying mosquitoes if not removed properly. Don't hesitate to give us a call to help you identify mosquito breeding sites and provide further control measures to keep your family safe from mosquitoes! □



Springtails do not breed indoors and generally don't cause any significant damage or harm. However, they can continually find their way inside when conditions are right. Weather plays an important role in springtail movement from their typical soil environment, especially moisture changes. If their habitat becomes too dry or too wet, springtails will seek out more favorable conditions. This can lead to tremendous numbers of springtails moving onto higher ground, which can often include your home. Once inside, springtails continue their search for moisture where they commonly end up in rooms with high humidity such as bathrooms or damp basements. Although these areas may be humid, springtails often die once inside the home unless a leaky pipe or similar moisture source is found.

The key to avoiding an indoor invasion of springtails is to focus on sealing the home and reducing moisture conditions. Outside, check for windows and doors that may not close completely, or plumbing and utility penetrations that may need to be sealed. Also, eliminate breeding sites such as areas with excessive mulch or leaf litter. Pay special attention to low spots around your yard that may collect water and avoid overwatering shaded areas that may not dry as quickly. If a crawl space is present, ensure that the space has adequate ventilation. Inside the home, be sure that door sweeps provide a tight seal, and that leaky pipes or other sources of water leaks are corrected immediately. Potted plants can also serve as an indoor breeding site for springtails. Therefore, avoid overwatering plants to keep moisture levels low, and always inspect outdoor potted plants for signs of springtails before bringing the plants inside. Remember, the presence of springtails can be an early warning sign of moisture issues that could attract pests and lead to costly water damage, so be sure to let us know if you have noticed springtails in or around your home. □