



# GETTING PESTS UNDER CONTROL.

USEFUL TIPS FOR PEST CONTROL.

# WBM.

Wohnungsbaugesellschaft  
Berlin-Mitte mbH



## **GOOD PAGES FOR BETTER LIVING.**

There are certain advantages of being a large housing association. For example, over the years we have developed a practically inexhaustible list of good tips and essential advice on domestic issues together with our tenants and residents. We are pleased to be able to share the expertise we have gathered with you in the form of a practical how-to series. The guidebooks are designed to help you to avoid problems, save money and maintain or improve the living conditions and quality of life in your home.

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# **WBM.**

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## UNWELCOME VISITORS. AND HOW TO GET RID OF THEM.

We've all come across them at some point, but we're often too squeamish to talk about it. Time and again, unwelcome guests find their way into our homes and soon make their presence felt. And we ask ourselves: Where do all the ants come from? How do the bedbugs get into the bedroom? How do I deal with silverfish?

But what you really need to know is, what to do when your house has been infested by pests. How do you get unwelcome guests out of your home without having to call an exterminator? In the following pages you will find lots of tips on how to use everyday household utensils and products to get rid off pests, bugs and vermin, and also on how to keep them away in the future. We will also give advice on when it really is time to get the pest control in.



The brown rat is the main type of rat we come across. You can find them wherever there is enough food and enough hiding space. Just one pair of rats can produce up to 800 offspring in one year. Signs of the presence of rats include unpleasant smells, the discovery of nesting material, and when food supplies or textiles have been nibbled. Clean and hygienic conditions are important for preventing rat infestations. Foodstuff, including pet food, should not be left lying around. All residents must ensure organic waste bins are closed. Waste containers must be covered and waste belongs in the container, not beside it. Once rats have entered a building via a cellar, they can then reach the upper levels of a building through ducts. This is a further reason why food remains should not be disposed of in toilets.

Mice may not be everybody's favourite creature, but they are certainly not dangerous. So that mice can't get to it, food should be stored in sealed containers. There are various methods for getting rid of mice:

#### TIPS

- Cloths soaked in turpentine oil can be stuffed in mouse holes.
- Add turpentine oil (or turpentine substitute) to mopping liquid.
- Set a mousetrap with a bait of toasted bread spread with fat, or a drop of rosewood oil.
- Place a cloth with a piece of toasted bread over a deep bucket. If a mouse ventures into the bucket overnight, you can put it outside the next day.
- It can also help to put out a few sprigs of peppermint – mice can't stand the smell.

#### OBLIGATION TO REPORT INFESTATION

*Until 2006 a legal obligation to report problems with rats existed in Berlin. If you discover a rat infestation, you should inform your landlord immediately so that he can take action and call in experts.*



Feral domestic pigeons can become a problem in cities. They live in streets, squares and parks and are also referred to as feral pigeons today. Pigeons can live up to 20 years of age. They have only one mate and breed from early spring until late autumn, without interruption. Depending on the environment, a pair of pigeon mates will have three to seven broods of up to five young. Attics, wall cavities, bridges, train stations and factory buildings are the pigeon's favourite nesting places. Since the pigeons' nests can in turn be infested by a variety of pests and bugs, the latter can then also make their way into the nearby work spaces and living areas. The red fowl mite, the pigeon tick and the larvae of the skin beetle can carry allergenic material. Dust from feathers and faeces and decaying materials from vermin and pests can also cause allergies. For this reason, pigeons should not be fed in residential areas.

### DAMAGE

A pigeon produces 10–12 kg of wet droppings and 2.5 kg of dry droppings annually. This can gather in particular in their resting, breeding and feeding areas. In attics with openings, layers of droppings 30 cm deep and more have been measured. And though the smell of the droppings a flock makes is particularly

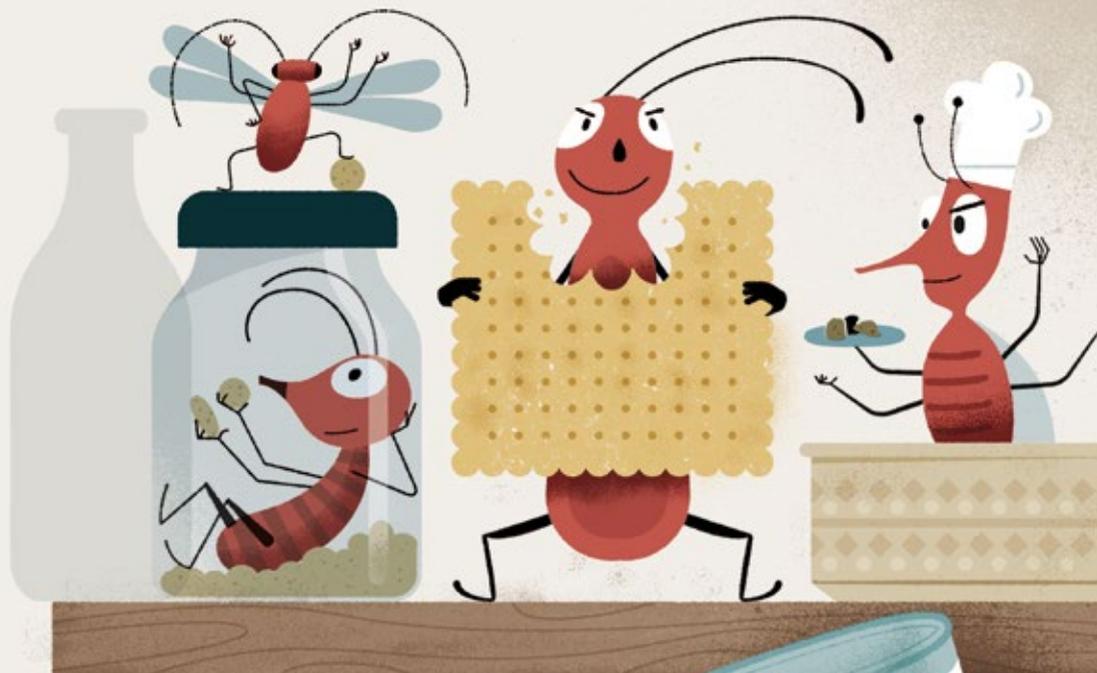
obnoxious, it doesn't stop there. Droppings also contain corrosive uric acid, which can lead to structural damage to buildings, to the destruction of monuments and even metal components. There are a number of ways to keep pigeons away from domestic buildings.

### JUST DON'T FEED THEM!

Pigeons can find everything they need to survive in nature. In cities they are fed with all kinds of scraps that are not suited to their natural diet, and they therefore become susceptible to illnesses and parasites. These additional sources of food also attract rats, mice and other vermin.

### TIPS

- Landlords can fit spikes on cornicing, wall ledges and girders.
- Another possibility is netting, which can be fitted over business signs, sculptures, old buildings and balconies. The netting is stretched around the contours so tightly that pigeons can no longer land.





## FLIES AND MOSQUITOES

Every house has its own resident fly. And as long as it's just the one, then it's not too much of a problem. But the buzzing can get a little annoying as soon as numbers increase. For a fly- and mosquito-free house, it is advisable to open only the windows on the side of the house in the shade. Or use standard fly nets or screens. The trusty old fly swat is a handy tool. If you find yourself with a more serious infestation, then glue traps work well on windows and doors. Another option is to take advantage of their dislike for particular smells. Spray a little vinegar essence over a heated oven top. You can be sure the flies will be out of there in a jiffy, and the vinegar smell dissipates fairly quickly. The alternative method using peppermint oil does smell a little better. This is sprayed on the soil of all the plants in the room.



## FRUIT FLIES

These pesky pests just love fruit bowls. To keep them away, sprinkle a few cloves amongst the fruit.

### TIPS

- Put a drop of vinegar on the bottom of a light bulb and flies won't hover around it.
- Laurel oil and castor oil repel flies.
- To make your own cheap and poison-free fly paper, soak a piece of blotting paper in a mixture of ground pepper and syrup. Lay the paper on a flat plate. And there you have your very own fly magnet.
- Another useful method of getting rid of flies is washing furniture with soap water.
- And one more tip: put out a bowl of water with a few drops of cedar oil.
- A mixture of water and wine vinegar or cider vinegar can kill fruit flies. Use a 1:1 mixture for best results. Adding a few drops of washing-up liquid to the mixture makes the perfect trap.



The red flour beetle is another pest you might find in your food storage cupboard. The fully grown beetle is between 3 and 4 cm in size. Their colour varies from brown to black and their bodies are cylinder-shaped. Their smell is similar to Lysol, reminiscent of hospital smells. The red flour beetle's larvae are yellowish white and worm-shaped. Red flour beetles breed in a variety of dry vegetable products such as grains, cereals, peanuts, sunflower seeds and dried fruit. Red flour beetles are best known as pests in mills and processing plants that deal with starch products. They are often introduced into private households in products from mills.

#### **WHAT DAMAGE DO RED FLOUR BEETLES CAUSE?**

Infested food must be disposed of because the beetle droppings contain strong quinone. Accidentally consuming the larvae is not harmful to health.



The drugstore beetle is one of the most common household pests. It is the least fussy of the domestic pests. It will attack meat and other animal products as well as vegetable products. The rust-coloured beetle can vary in size from 1.75 to 3 mm. The female lays roughly 100 white eggs 0.4 mm in size, which are spread in storage areas and in dark spaces. The young larvae are 0.5 mm in size, and mature larvae reach 5 mm. The white maggots look like miniature grubs and pupate in oval cocoons spun out of foodstuffs. Growing from an egg to a beetle takes up to nine months.

#### **WHAT DAMAGE DOES A DRUGSTORE BEETLE DO?**

The larvae contaminate foodstuff and damage other materials as they eat their way through them, spinning and binding food particles together as they go. You can detect contamination by tiny pin-holes in products and packaging. However, infestations are often only detected once the beetles appear, since once the female has laid its eggs, it moves on, settling on windows or walls.



## INDIAN MEAL MOTHS

Indian meal moths are another pest to be found in your food storage cupboard. The wings of the adult moth are reddish brown at the tips. Their wingspan is 16–20 mm. The oily, shiny caterpillars grow to 13 mm long and are white, light pink or a greenish colour. An infestation of Indian meal moths is mostly caused by bringing eggs and larvae into the house in food, or when insects that have flown in spread to inaccessible areas such as hinges, drill holes in kitchen cupboards, loose wallpaper, gaps in floorboards and skirting boards. The female moths lay their eggs on food packaging. The larvae or caterpillars that emerge force their way into foods via small holes. The pests contaminate food with droppings, cocoon threads and shed skin. Larvae spin a cocoon inside the foodstuff before pupation. The Indian meal moth's caterpillars eat, damage and contaminate cereals, nuts, pulses, chocolate, cocoa, coffee, tea, spices and dried fruit. Infested food is spoilt and should be disposed of in tightly sealed plastic bags.

### WHAT TYPE OF FOOD DOES THE INDIAN MEAL MOTH SPOIL?

- *Forgotten food supplies*
- *Bakery products, dried fruit, nuts, cereals*
- *Chocolate, pralines*
- *Muesli, sunflower seeds, cornflakes*
- *Expired bird feed, rabbit food, dog food and cat food*
- *Fruit tea, black tea*

### TIPS FOR DEALING WITH DRUGSTORE BEETLES, INDIAN MEAL MOTHS AND RED FLOUR BEETLES

- *Destroy contaminated food immediately.*
- *Store food supplies in a dry environment and seal thoroughly.*
- *Remove bread crumbs under and inside breadbins and toasters regularly.*
- *Empty and clean food storage cupboards every 2–3 months.*
- *Clean cupboards with the the vacuum-cleaner nozzle thoroughly, particularly the gaps and joints.*
- *All food should be stored in cool, dry places.*



Wasps are typical household pests. The yellow and black-striped hymenopterous insects buzz around food, especially in the summer months, and can cause painful stings, which can be very dangerous for those allergic to them. However, wasps can also be enormously useful in nature. They feed on flies, grasshoppers, butterflies but also on sugary foods such as fruit, juice, cakes, and also meat. The insects are active in a radius of over 1 km from the nest. They build their nest in roller-shutter boxes, in flooring and in attics. In order to avoid attracting wasps, food should not be left lying open. Fly screens also help by preventing wasps from entering buildings.

## CONTROL

Many types of wasps are protected by nature- and species-conservation laws and may only be dealt with in accordance with certain regulations. Exterminations, following a consultation or inspection by nature-conservation authorities, are only permitted when there is an immediate danger to humans from a wasps' or hornets' nest.

## TIPS

- *In such cases, please make enquiries to your Local Government, Environmental Office, or Conservation Society. The conservation society NABU has an emergency wasp service, which you can reach on: 986 41 07.*
- *Action to deal with the problem should only be taken by a trained and accredited pest controller.*



Cockroaches are extremely quick, flat, light to dark brown insects that can grow to between one and three centimetres. They are nocturnal and are mostly to be seen in the evening and early morning. Cockroaches are omnivores. They will devour meat and meat products, flour-based and dairy products, sweet foods, fruit and vegetables as well as kitchen scraps and leftovers. They also need to drink liquids. Cockroaches mostly remain hidden behind skirting boards, door and wall panels and loose floorboards. They can also be found in pipes, warm and humid ducts, gaps in walls, spaces behind the refrigerator, packaging, near fish and reptile tanks and aviaries as well as in plant boxes for indoor plants. Cockroaches thrive at temperatures between 25 and 29 °C.

### WHAT ACTION SHOULD YOU TAKE AGAINST COCKROACHES?

Get rid of potential hideouts:

- Secure and grout loose, damaged floorboards and tiles.
- Glue floor coverings thoroughly, seal thresholds and door frames.
- Arrange appliances and furniture in the kitchen – for example, the refrigerator – so that there is a gap between the appliance and the floor, as well as the wall. It will now be easier

to keep an eye on and clean potential hiding spaces.

- Cover compartments in cupboards and drawers with transparent foil in order to make potential hiding places visible.

### TAKE PREVENTATIVE MEASURES!

- *Do not leave food open. Store in sealable containers.*
- *Keep work surfaces in the kitchen clean, do not leave dirty washing-up in the sink overnight.*
- *Always hang up wet kitchen towels and cloths to dry.*
- *When opening bought goods, especially foodstuff and packaged drinks, look out for cockroaches that might have smuggled their way into your home.*

### THE RIGHT WAY TO TACKLE COCKROACHES

*Only an expert can carry out a suitable, professional cockroach extermination as they will be familiar with the different types of cockroaches. Please inform your landlord, who can consult the relevant health authorities. All affected apartments in a residential building should be treated for cockroaches at the same time, since it is very rare for the insects to infest just one apartment.*





## ANTS

Ants are attracted by sweets, pastries and warmth.

### TIPS

- *You don't have to kill ants. They can be repelled by rosemary oil or tea tree oil. Simply drizzle across the ants' points of entry and exit. Most will vanish overnight.*
- *In the case of an infestation, flat plates with sweetened flat beer should be put out.*
- *Other tried and trusted ant baits include: Water flavoured with honey or raspberries, diluted liqueur and syrup, spreading out cloves, tomato leaves or sage leaves.*
- *Place a mixture of sodium borate/baking powder and icing sugar close to where the ants are active. That will destroy the ant eggs and larvae.*



## MOTHS

As well as food moths (Indian meal moths), clothes moths can also become a real scourge and devour textiles. So that moths don't get anywhere near your wardrobe, you can take the following precautions:

### TIPS

- *Beat and brush your clothes often in fresh air.*
- *Keep your rooms bright and well aired.*
- *Aerate your wardrobes regularly and insert dried peels of lemons and oranges.*
- *Place cedar wood, small parcels filled with lavender or a few pieces of soap in the wardrobe.*
- *Coat the inside of the wardrobe with turpentine oil or lavender oil.*
- *Moths will not attack woollens that have been sprinkled with pepper. Wrap vulnerable clothing in fresh newspaper. These are good alternatives for clothes that will not be worn for a while.*



Bedbugs are on the increase, especially in Berlin. These insects can find their way into your home in second-hand appliances and furniture made from wood. Bedbugs can often be brought home from trips abroad in the locks of suitcases and in folds in rucksacks. Bedbugs feed on blood. These flat insects are between one and seven millimetres in size and are coloured from yellowish brown to reddish brown. They bite humans mostly at night. Bites last between 5–10 minutes and then the insects return to their hiding place. The bite causes itching that can last from 7–10 days. Wheals are frequent. People with allergies can have a more violent reaction. There is no knowledge of diseases being transmitted by bedbugs.

### THE BEDBUG'S HIDING PLACES

These nocturnal insects hide in narrow gaps and cavities, in bed frames, mattresses, in cushions, behind loose wallpaper, shelves and in curtain and blind fixtures. Often you can find small, round, brown-black droppings, which, unlike fly droppings, cannot be wiped away easily. If you buy second-hand furniture or have returned from travelling, you should inspect the items or your luggage very closely.

### TAKE PREVENTATIVE MEASURES

*If you have bedbugs in your bedroom, you should pull the bed away from the walls, disassemble it and beat and brush each part over a light coloured cloth. If the bed has legs, they should be masked with double-sided sticking tape. You can also use the tape to make a border around a futon. Mosquito nets, when attached under the bed, have also proven useful.*

### WHAT SHOULD YOU DO IF YOU HAVE A BEDBUG INFESTATION?

If that doesn't help, then you should call in a professional pest controller to prevent bedbugs from multiplying.



## SILVERFISH

Silverfish may not be everybody's favourite house guest, but they are harmless. These nimble, nocturnal insects don't grow any bigger than a centimetre and stay in dark nooks and crannies by day, hiding behind skirting boards, seals and loose wallpaper. They prefer warmth and require a humid environment. They are often to be found in kitchens under refrigerators, in bathrooms or in laundry rooms. Their preferred conditions are between 20 to 30° C and 80 to 90 % humidity. Mould in a house can result in a high number of silverfish.

### WHAT ACTION SHOULD YOU TAKE AGAINST SILVERFISH?

It is advisable to keep the infested rooms dry and well ventilated; silverfish cannot reproduce in dry and cold conditions. Clean tiling grooves and cavities with a vacuum-cleaner nozzle.

### TIPS

- *Natural scents such as lemon or lavender repel silverfish.*
- *Sugar and baking powder mixed in equal parts can be spread to get rid of them. The sugar acts as a bait and the baking powder as a poison.*
- *It can also be useful to put out strips of paper that have been coated in syrup.*
- *Lay a damp, white cotton cloth sprinkled with dry plaster in the bathroom. The silverfish will gather underneath and can be shaken out the next day.*
- *Bowls of ammonium chloride solution will disperse the pests within 24 hours.*

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