


# *what's buggin' ya?*

AN EDUCATIONAL NEWSLETTER ON MANAGING INSECTS IN OUR ENVIRONMENT  
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*The calendar says it's officially summer, but it's felt like summer for weeks now! Hot weather and lack of rain can get some insects moving that normally stay hidden. Read on to learn what to expect during the hottest part of the year!*

 Molly Keck

## TARANTULAS ON THE MOVE!

Every summer a strange phenomenon happens with our native tarantulas, the Texas Tan. They get up out of their burrows and start moving. It is mainly males who start to migrate, and it's believed that they are searching for females to mate.

In some parts of Texas they can blanket the road as they move from one side to the other. In these cases, it's an amazing site!

If you run across one in your yard, just leave him alone, they are not aggressive. All spiders have fangs and can bite, but you will have to hold one to give it a chance.

Once the males find a female, they will mate and the spiderlings will hatch as early as July. They will stay with their mother, spending most of their time on her back for the next week or so before they leave. The mother tarantula will lay 100 to 1000 eggs, but most will die in the first few months.



Texas Tan Tarantula, Male

Tarantulas do not prefer to live in your home, but they will move indoors accidentally. They are not trying to infest your home or live in the walls, they just find a hole or feel an air current and move in. To prevent them from moving indoors, seal up holes, use metal screening around vents, and be sure you can't see daylight around doors. As large as tarantulas are, they still don't need much of a crack to squeeze indoors.

## ENTOMOLOGY YOUTH CAMP IN JULY



Every summer, I host a bug camp for kids ages 7 and up. We have a great time during our camp, collecting insects, doing experiments, and putting together an insect collection. I'm very proud to say that our camp is challenging enough for teens and understandable enough for younger kids. We work very hard in modifying the activities and experiments based on age.

I am also proud to say that this summer we have had so much interest, we have had to add a second camp! Currently the only open camp we have is July 19-20 from 9am-3pm. We will provide snacks, but kids are asked to bring a sack lunch.

This camp is always a hit and we learn so much about science and insects. Everything we do is insect related – we do experiments with insects, collect insects, make an insect collection, and do insect activities. The cost of the camp is \$85 and each camper receives a collection kit with all the tools you need to make an insect collection: collection box, killing solution, jars, forceps, pins, labels, pens, magnifying glass, spreading board, pinning block, collection bag, net and collection manual.

For more information about the insect camp, call me at 210-467-6575 or email me at [mekeck@ag.tamu.edu](mailto:mekeck@ag.tamu.edu). You should also find the camp registration fliers on our website: <http://bexar-tx.tamu.edu>. Camp fills up quickly, so be sure to call before you send in your registration just in case we have run out of room.

## HOLES IN MY LAWN, WHAT'S THE CAUSE?

This time of year, rhino beetles are emerging from the soil in search of a mate. You will find them crawling across the sidewalk in early mornings or evenings. They emerge from the soil, where they live most of their lives, eating organic matter and composting the soil for you as larvae. After they go through a pupal stage, they crawl out of the soil, mate and die shortly after.

They are a very large beetle, dark in color, and very strong. They do not bite or hurt, but they can scratch with their legs and if you hold them in your palm you will feel their strength as they try to get out.

You may find a large hole in your turf, such as the picture below. This is similar to what rhino beetles cause.

It is nothing to worry about and it is temporary. We usually consider rhino beetles to be beneficial, breaking down organic matter and an indicator of good soil quality.



Photo courtesy of Jonathan Venner  
Typical hole left by rhino beetle



## WHAT'S ALL THIS FUSS ABOUT BED BUGS?

First, bed bugs are on the first, and there is very little you can do about it. All the experts are saying that its only a matter of time before we all experience them in one way or another.

Now, our culture still looks at bed bugs as a sanitation issue. In some situations this is true, but bed bugs are excellent hitchhikers and they do not discriminate against any socioeconomic status, ethnicity, or the cleanliness of your home. Apartments and homes in which you share a wall with other families are at higher risk, simply because you are sharing walls. If one family gets bed bugs, it is extremely likely that adjacent apartments will get them as well. They travel between walls easily (above and below as well as side to side).

If you believe you have bed bugs, contact a pest control company that deals with bed bugs on a regular basis. They should do a thorough inspection and if they find bed bugs, they should be able to show you evidence or actual bed bugs. Pest control companies are educated in management practices for bed bugs, but it also involves you as the homeowner. Work with them to keep items off the floor, clutter minimized, and other sanitation practices they recommend.

Definitely, do not move to another room, home, or the couch. It sounds hard to stay put in the room where you know you have bed bugs, but you will likely move them with you on sheets, pillows, clothing, etc. At least try to stay in the same home, if you move to a friend or family members it is likely you will move bed bugs with you.

Remember, you can get bed bugs from nearly anywhere, it is NOT an indication of health, status, wealth, or cleanliness. Be sure to speak out if you think you have them and don't be embarrassed – we'll all be in your shoes eventually!

To have an insect identified, bring it into the office at 3355 Cherry Ridge, Suite 212.

For More Info on Insects of Pest Management Contact:

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*Upcoming Programs:*

**August 24, Bed Bug Awareness 2-3:30pm**

**September 27, 30 Bugs Every Gardener Should Know 2-4pm**

*Held at the Bexar County Extension Office, 355 Cherry Ridge, Suite 212 SATX 78230*

Educational programs of Texas Agrilife Extension Service are open to all people without regard to race, color, sex, disability, religion, age, or national origin.