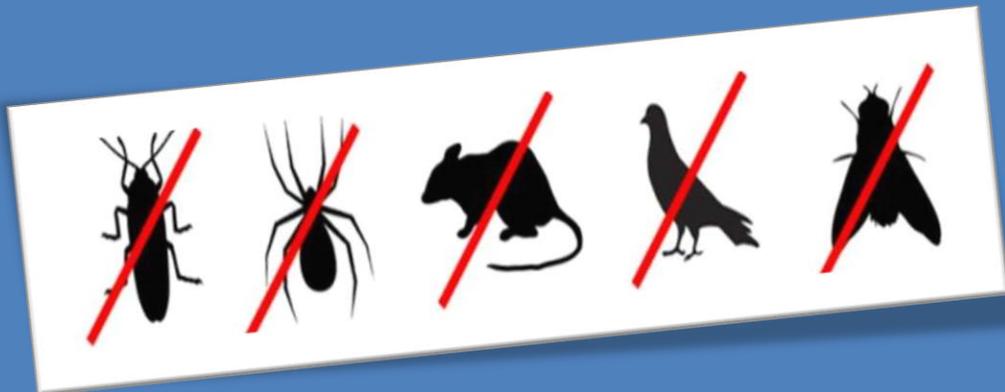


# The Homeowners Guide to effective Pest Control

*The top 10 house household pests we get called for!*

*(And how to avoid them with 50 + tips!)*



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*A simple guide to common pests found in the home, to help you save time money and distress of pests in your home and garden.*

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## What's Inside:

1. Top 10 pests we get householders call about
2. Over 50 DIY Pest Control Tips
3. 5 Critical things to look for in a pest control provider

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### **Pests – why they invade your home**

In the battle against pests – we need to understand the enemy. What they are looking for. It is normally food, water and shelter.

We can invite them in by making it easy for them, by leaving ample food out, providing shelter by not repairing stuff and giving them easy access to water.

or

We can discourage them by implementing some of the tips in this book.

## 1. Rodents



To deter rodents such as Rats & mice from your property, you can take a few simple steps to avoid inviting them around your property:

- Feeding garden birds, do not do this to excess and use a bird table or feeder and clean up spilt food.
- Keep yards and gardens clean and tidy, by cutting back overgrown areas and clearing any piles of wood/debris. This removes areas for nesting
- Check that drain inspection covers are in a good condition
- Keep dustbin lids closed and rodent proof and clean up spillages
- Avoid food waste in compost heaps and place wire under them to prevent access
- Eliminate any access points to your home by sealing gaps around pipes
- Under sheds, rats only need a gap of 15mm to gain entry, so block with wire

## 2. Flies



Flies are unpleasant creatures feeding on dead or decaying matter. They are a major player in spreading diseases and contaminating food stuff and food prep areas. all fly species feed by vomiting saliva onto the food and sucking up the resulting liquid – Yuk!

- Keep doors and windows closed to exclude flies from you home
- Consider fly screens in kitchens and food storage areas, they are cheaper than you think
- If you have pets, clean up dog waste quickly
- If you have a cat clean litter trays regularly
- Don't leave uneaten pet food in bowls to attract flies
- Consider a fly zapper machine, again less then £100 will protect you
- Ensure bin lids are a good fix to exclude flies
- Empty internal bins on a regular basis to deter flies

### 3. Bed Bugs



It's is virtually impossible to prevent a Bed bug infestation, as a rule they are spread by bad luck. However, there are some things you can do to reduce your chances of getting an infestation:

- Before staying or moving into new accommodation, check for signs of Bed bugs.
- Avoid taking in to the house second-hand bedroom furniture without checking it thoroughly.
- Many quality hotels have a proactive monitoring regime by a professional pest control company who can help detect early signs
- Also, hotel staff are trained in what to look for when they are working and cleaning in the rooms, this mean you can detect a problem before a guest does.

#### **If you think you have stayed in an infested room:**

Upon arriving home, immediately check your luggage and clothing etc for bugs. If you find Bed bugs, place all clothing in a bin bag (so you don't spread them around your home).

Then either; wash everything at a 'hot' (60°C) temperature setting; tumbled dry at a 'hot setting for at least 30 minutes; dry clean everything; or place everything into a bag and then in the deep freezer for at least 3 days.

If still concerned about an infestation, call a professional pest controller to survey your home for treatment and/or peace of mind.

## 4. Wasps



The wasp is one of the few insects in the UK, that people despise because it can give nasty sting. Apart from being annoying and aggressive when sat outside eating or drinking. They can be very dangerous to children, small pets or the elderly if stung. Severe reactions include swelling that can be life threatening, with people dying from wasp stings every year.

### **The old colony dies off in late autumn - Only the queen wasps survive the winter by hibernating**

- If you find a drowsy Queen wasp hibernating in an outhouse, use an approved wasp kill spray (by following the instructions on the tin)
- Be careful when picking the body up, as wasp's sting are still active after death
- Place in suitable rubbish container.
- If you find an active nest – don't leave it! Get it treated by a professional
- Wasps from April to June can be docile, as they are concentrating on growing their colony
- They do some good by catching Aphids etc and feeding it to their young grubs
- Once the queen wasp stops laying in July they become more aggressive, searching out sweet foods (as they have no grubs to feed and no sweet food in return)
- Cover sweet foods if outside (e.g. having a BBQ) as wasps will be attracted to them
- Put out wasp traps in July to catch scout wasps looking for a food source
- Don't put out before July as you may catch Honey Bees
- Scout wasps go back to the nest and tell their mates where the food is, that's why you get more and more!
- Old wasp nests don't need to be removed as they don't re use them.

**Remember if you find a nest get a professional to sort it. They have the protective clothing, equipment to work at height and many approved professional chemicals to treat it with**

## 5. Spiders & Ants



Crawling insects are one of the commonest insect groups found in domestic houses. Black Ants are looking for sweet food to take back to their nest. UK Spiders are not dangerous or a risk to public health, but many people have a fear of them (arachnophobia).

### Ants

- Pouring a kettle of boiling water over the nest site is only a short term measure!
- Look for ant trails or nests and treat with an approved pesticide from a garden supplier
- Always Follow the label instructions and use recommended protective equipment
- The most common ant is the Black Garden Ant, which is actually very dark brown!
- The ant is a highly organised social insect, the foraging worker ants that invade buildings are in search of food.
- Especially sweet foodstuffs which they take back to the nest to feed to the queen and larvae.
- Wipe down surfaces of food and block all entry points, where possible
- We are starting to see other ant species such as Wood, Pharaoh's and Ghost Ants

### Spiders

- There is no scientific evidence that putting conkers in your home will deter spiders!
- The best way to remove spiders is to remove prey items (e.g. Flies)
- Not all insecticides are approved for use on spiders – check before use
- Vacuum up a spider or use a cup and card, then release outside
- The UK has over 650 species of spiders
- 12 of them are venomous enough to cause humans severe pain
- Don't worry - as most want to run away and only bite if threatened
- The most venomous of all is the notorious False Widow Spider

## 6. Fleas



Fleas are small wingless insects (about 2mm), red-brown in colour and flattened. The most common species of Flea for biting humans is the Cat Flea. Then the Bird Flea followed by the rare Dog Flea, the Human Fleas is extremely rare.

There is little scientific evidence in the UK that Fleas spread disease. Obviously, a Flea bite can cause intense irritation to the skin. Different people react differently to a bite, some can be extreme and other take longer to show signs.

The typical symptom of a flea bite is a small red spot about 5mm in diameter.

**It's difficult to prevent your pets from getting Fleas. However, there are some things you can do to reduce your chances of getting them:**

1. Pet maintenance - Applying veterinary approved Flea products to your pet, on a regular basis to kill any resident fleas.
2. Vacuuming - Frequently vacuum the areas your pet is around, special attention to carpeted areas and any furniture that is frequented by your pet. (e.g. sofa or chair)
3. Washing - Regularly wash your pet's blanket, bedding and all other washable items in the hottest water possible (60 degs C is good).
4. Gardening – Ensure you keep your garden neat and tidy by cutting your lawn and collecting up any leaves, hedge or grass cuttings etc.

For a Flea infestation, contact a professional pest control company. A qualified professional will have access to a range of professional use insecticides and the technical knowledge on how to effectively break the cycle.

## 7. Cockroachs



The two-main species of cockroach in the UK, they are the Oriental and German Cockroaches. They are unable to survive outside in the UK but can thrive inside. Found in ducts and warm plant rooms in hotels, hospitals etc. Humid areas are favoured, they can survive with out food for long periods but only few days with out water.

**Areas with food, water and dark spaces to hide are ideal environments for Cockroaches to live. Here few prevention tips for securing your property:**

- Keep areas tidy and clean – Clean down all surfaces thoroughly to remove any food residue. Do not leave dirty dishes and utensils in the sink. Keep bins covered, clean, and emptied regularly. Areas such as top or beneath your refrigerator are warm and food collect their, attracting Cockroaches, so clean these areas regularly
- Proofing and Repair - seal gaps around doors, windows, and where utility lines enter to prevent entry. If possible, repair any leaks beneath the sink, and on the sink top, immediately, thus cutting a potential water source

**If you get an infestation and try to solve it yourself then follow these tips & guidelines:**

- Hygiene - A thorough clean of the area should take place prior to the insecticidal treatment. Pay attention to removing food and water sources and hiding places.
- Sticky traps - The use of sticky traps is not recommended for controlling cockroaches, but can be used for monitoring populations
- Insecticidal control - The success of the treatment depends on what insecticides are chosen, and how thorough the application is. Remember to pay particular attention to cracks and crevices where eggs and nymphs may be found.
- When using any insecticide, make sure it is administered in a safe and secure manner, and that products are kept out of reach of children and pets.

## 8. Birds



Gulls, Pigeons, Sparrows, Starlings etc etc, we have had calls for all of them. From Pigeons fouling cars to amorous Gulls calling at 4am in the summer waking folks up!

All birds are protected under the Wildlife and countryside Act 1981, so you have to know your species. There are dispensations for pest birds, but it can be quite complex. As some can be controlled, others cannot but you can take their eggs.

*Get a professional to look at your options to ensure you are within the law!*

### **Here are some tips for preventing bird issues at home:**

- Don't put too much bird food out, apart from the rats you will also encourage the bigger birds in to your garden.
- The bigger the bird the more droppings it will produce and leave!
- Ensure soffits and fascias are in good condition to stop birds entering the roof space to breed
- Mesh any holes in brickwork or access points
- Swift, Swallow and House Martin nests can only be removed when the birds have left
- If you park under a tree and get droppings on your car, find a new place to park or chop the tree down (it's a fact of life, birds sit in trees!)

## 9. Grey Squirrel & Glis Glis (Edible dormouse)



**Both these mammals look cute - but can cause havoc if they get in to your loft or attic!**

The Grey Squirrel, was introduced deliberately to this country sometime in the 19th century and has spread far and wide.

Attracted to garden by bird feeders and other food sources they can be a real problem if they get in your roof. Once inside they will chew woodwork, strip electrical wiring - causing a fire risk. Chew up loft insulation and even drown in the water tank (that you bath or brush your teeth in!)

Glis Glis were introduced from Tring Park, Hertfordshire and are protected by the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981.

They will also chew wood and any other treasured belongings in the loft.

**Here are some tips to exclude squirrels & Glis Glis from your property:**

- Trim tree branches away from your house. This makes it more difficult for a squirrel or Glis Glis jump on to your roof.
- Check for holes in the house soffit or fascia allowing access
- Block any holes with sheet metal or mesh as they can chew through wood
- Check the loft from the inside, do it in the day and switch of the light. Any daylight coming through will show you access points to block.
- If you hear sounds in the roof, it probably not a ghost but a squirrel or Glis!
- In Slovenia and Croatia Glis Glis are considered a rare delicacy.

## 10. Fox and Mole



**These two pests are found in the garden and normally cause damage to the lawn.**

Foxes will leave fouling that is unpleasant and a risk to humans.

Both are looking for worms and leave a mess in the process.

### **Moles:**

- Moles have shallow feeding tunnels and deep tunnels
- Moles have poor eye sight so are rarely seen above ground
- In our experience (and clients) sonic mole repeller don't work - save your money
- Moles are highly territorial, so trapping can remove a problem mole
- Gassing must be carried out at least 10 meters from a house.
- If you get one mole hill in the spring, its normally Mr mole off to find Mrs Mole for fun!

### **Foxes:**

- Foxes are mostly nocturnal
- Foxes will scavenge around bird tables and compost heaps for food
- Foxes can be excluded from gardens by good fencing
- A vixen will dig under sheds to have her young, mesh will exclude her beforehand
- Don't shoot a fox with an airgun - as it's not powerful enough, you will only injure it
- Keep waste and recycling bins with lids on and bin areas clean, so not to attract foxes
- Feeding foxes in your garden only encourages more and they become dependent on you.
- Also think of the neighbours, as they may be not so tolerant of them
- Foxes carry sarcoptic mange and fox tapeworm
- That blood curdling screech at night is during the fox mating season

## 5 Critical things you should look for in a pest control company

It would be virtually impossible to pest proof a complete house. But using many of the tips we have provided, will minimise the chance of a pest infestation in your home.

Visitors, neighbours, climate change, the age, location and type of property are all factors, to levels of pest infestation a property may experience. Different people have different tolerance to pests in their home. To some, a wasp nest or a few flies is not a problem. To others it is a nightmare, especially if they are allergic to a wasp sting.

If you do choose to engage the services of a pest control company, you would be well advised to consider these 5 things when choosing:

### **1. Physical local office, with phone support:**

When you have an urgent issue, you don't want to talk to a central call centre or an answerphone. You want to speak to a human who can help you solve your issue.

### **2. Qualified Technicians:**

Would you use an unqualified tradesman to fix your electrics or gas? I guess not! Use a professional Pest Controller who is qualified to apply toxic chemicals around your home. Especially if you have children and pets. The Royal Society for Public Health RSPH Level 2 in pest control should be the minimum. Also look for BASIS Prompt - Professional Pest Controllers registered. This means they undertake to carry out training every year to achieve and maintain CPD points (Continued Professional Development).

### **3. British Pest Control Association (B.P.C.A) Membership:**

All BPCA members are audited every 3 years to check on their competency and qualifications to ensure they provide a professional service and work within codes of conduct. If you have a dispute with your pest controller, then you have an independent body to complain to if the issue is not resolved.

### **4. Responsive**

Pest control is about solving client problems, you want a company that can visit you quickly and give a clear indication of the treatment, effectiveness and cost. They may also give you further tips and help on ensuring the problem does not re-occur.

## 5. Documentation

How many times have we heard “well this bloke came in a van and sprayed some stuff in my house and said that should do the trick”

Treatment reports are vital for a pest infestation or treatment. It records dates, compounds used, quantities and other important information. You should know what was used in your house in case there is problem or reaction to the compounds. It should also give you an emergency telephone number gain in case of any unforeseen problems.

Both you and the pest control technician should sign it, after they have gone through it with you. A copy should be left with you for your records.

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A search on Google will bring up many Pest Control companies in your area, some will be national with local branches. Some small independent companies and some one-man bands.

Always look for one with the following credentials as you then know you are getting a professional service:



[bpca.org.uk](http://bpca.org.uk)



[basis-reg.co.uk/Schemes/PROMPT/](http://basis-reg.co.uk/Schemes/PROMPT/)



[rsph.org.uk](http://rsph.org.uk)

## A Letter from BTP | Professional Bird & Pest Control:

Dear Reader,

We hope you have found this guide useful, about pest control around your home or business.

Pest control is very straight forward - if you know what you are doing. Most infestations or issues can be solved quickly, effectively and cost effective.

It today's ever changing world, regulations and legislations are changing on a regular basis and so we must keep up with it.

Existing Pest Control compounds are being removed for less toxic ones - to protect the environment.

If you require the services of a pest control company then please consider us as we would love to help.

Pest issues affect everyone sooner or later, so please use this guide to help or call us on 01525 863 951 for professional help and guidance.

Advice is always given freely.

Yours faithfully

The BTP Team

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