



# CONSUMER \$ENSE

OCTOBER 2009

OSU EXTENSION SERVICE TULSA COUNTY 4116 E 15TH STREET  
TULSA, OK 74112 (918) 746-3700 WWW.OCES.TULSACOUNTY.ORG

VOLUME 1, ISSUE 11

## PANTRY PESTS

by Sue Gray, OSU Extension Horticulture Educator

When our food starts to move around before our eyes....there could be a problem.

Stored grain-based products, such as beans, rice, pasta, boxed mixes and pet foods are a banquet to six-legged critters. Sometimes the eggs of various pantry insects are present on the food when it is purchased. These eggs are killed when we cook the food, posing no problem. However, long term storage enables the egg to hatch into a larva which feeds on the beans or rice. This larva can then mature into either a small gray moth or a small brown beetle.

The best remedy for pantry pests is to use up food rapidly, storing larger quantities in a freezer or a tin container. Pests can chew through plastic sacks and cardboard. For this reason, do not simply store these products in their original container. This also protects food from invasion by pests from external sources elsewhere in the kitchen.

Visual cues that pantry pests are present are small, grey moths flying near ceiling lights and/or small beetles crawling around storage cabinets. Discard any items that contain these pests and do a thorough clean up and vacuuming of cabinets, floors and crevices around the kitchen.

Store pet food in a metal trash container with a tight fitting lid. Inspect dried flower arrangements and wicker baskets as they are a source of food for these critters as well.

The following O.S.U. website has information on pantry pests. It is titled: "Household Pest Control" <http://pods.dasnr.okstate.edu/docushare/dsweb/Get/Document-2286/EPP-7312web.pdf> It is also available for free at the Tulsa County OSU Extension Center.

## ALLOWANCES AND ALTERNATIVES

by Tracy Lane, OSU Extension 4-H Educator

There is no right or wrong way to provide children with money and each method has advantages and disadvantages. Because each family's financial situation is different, choosing what works best is a family decision.

Four main ways children receive money include: cash gifts, earned money, dole, and allowances. *Cash gifts* are often received on special occasions such as birthdays or holidays. *Earned money* involves being paid for completing a task. The *dole* is money parents give children on request, and an *allowance* usually means giving a child a specific amount of money on a regular basis.

Allowances may offer both benefits and challenges for a family. Since allowances provide predictable amounts of money for children, it allows the child to practice basic money management skills and encourages independence and responsibility. An allowance may challenge parents, who may be unsure how much money to give a child, or may worry the money might be misused. Regardless of the type of method chosen, the key is providing a way for children to practice making money decisions. Valuable tips are:

- Let children learn from their own spending decisions.
- Don't always come to the rescue. Kids can learn from their mistakes.
- Practice goal setting and planning for future needs.
- Remember that children will differ in their ideas and goals about money.
- Be patient--kids need time to learn about money. Patient adults can set the stage for a positive learning environment for their children.

It is very important for parents to use a consistent approach to giving their children money and to teaching them about earning, spending, sharing, saving, and borrowing money. The life-long benefits of teaching children good money habits make it well worth the effort.

# ***MOUSE CONTROL***

*by Bruce Peaverley, OSU Extension Agriculture Educator*

Mice, mostly active at night, often invade homes during the fall months when outdoor temperatures become colder. Mice contaminate food for humans, pets and livestock. They can damage structures and property. Mice, being so small, can gain entry to homes and buildings quite easily. They are excellent climbers, can leap twelve inches from the floor onto a flat space. Mice can squeeze through openings ¼ inch across. To effectively control mice involves sanitation, exclusion, and population reduction.

Sanitation and exclusion are preventative measures. Clean up areas that provide mouse habitat, and block access to home and buildings. Block openings with steel wool or foam insulation products; however, once a mouse infestation already exists, trapping or baiting is almost always a necessity to reduce populations.

Trapping works well when mice are not numerous or can be used as a follow-up measure after a baiting program. If you trap, you have a choice of snap traps or multi-capture live traps. Place traps where you see mice activity. Key sites are along walls, dark corners, or any site that shows mouse activity. Place traps no more than ten feet apart where you see mouse activity. Peanut butter is good bait for snap traps. An alternative to traps are glue boards. Place glue boards near walls where mice travel. Do not place glue boards where children or other pets can reach them. If non-target-animals get caught on a glue board they can be removed by using vegetable oil as a solvent.

If you use baits to control mice be sure to read and follow all instructions. Most baits use an anticoagulant, to cause mouse death. Anticoagulants cause death due to internal bleeding. The anticoagulant baits provide good to excellent mouse control when placed in suitable locations for mice. Anticoagulants have the same effect on all warm-blooded animals, but sensitivity to these toxins varies among species. If misused, anticoagulants can cause death to pets, livestock or desirable wildlife that feed on the bait. Residues of anticoagulants that may be present in bodies of dead or dying rodents can cause toxic effects to scavengers or predators. However, this secondary effect is relatively low where baits are used properly.

Baits often in pellet form, are packaged in plastic or cellophane packets to keep baits fresh and to be easily placed into burrow walls or other locations. Place baits no more than ten feet apart where mice are active. Bait stations are useful when putting out baits. They protect the baits from weather and provide a safeguard to people, pets and wildlife. A bait station should have two openings one inch in diameter and should be large enough to accommodate several mice at one time.

## ***SAFETY TIPS FOR MANAGING HOME PESTICIDE***

*by Charlotte Richert, OSU Extension Family & Consumer Sciences Educator*

### SAFETY TIPS

- Read and follow all directions on the container label.
- Avoid repeated or prolonged contact of insecticides with the skin and prolonged inhalation of spray mist.
- Do not spray oil solutions near an open flame (pilot lights).
- Do not risk contaminating food by treating near food, dishes, or cooking and eating utensils.
- Dispose of empty pesticide containers, and do not puncture or incinerate aerosol or pressurized spray cans.
- Store insecticides in the labeled original containers, in a dry place where they cannot contaminate foodstuffs and where children and pets do not have access to them.
- After using pesticides, always wash your hands and face and any other exposed body areas.

### PREVENTION AND CONTROL HINTS

1. Clean out areas that make good homes for the pest.
2. Clean up areas that collect grease, food scraps, or other spillage which might provide a food source.
3. Eliminate excessive storage boxes from the attic and garage, and clean up foliage or other hiding places from around the outside foundation of the house.
4. If grain or flour pests are present, locate the infested material. Go through all cereal boxes, flour, beans, dry pet food, and spice containers until the infestation source is located. Dispose of the infested material, then a light application of pesticide.
5. Carefully check newly purchased dried foods for insect infestations, and store foods in lightly sealer glass, plastic or metal containers rather than in sacks, bags or boxes.

**NOTE: On ultrasonic electronic or sound control devices, to date, these devices have not been proven to be effective or practical.**