The Unlovable Lovebug

Love Bugs
How You Can Weather The Swarm
Page 2

Seasonal Reminders
Looking for Employment? Deans May be Looking for You!
Page 3

Deans is Growing!
Looking for Employment? Deans May be Looking for You!
Page 3

Customer Questions
“How Can I Tell the Difference Between Ants and Termites?”
Page 3

I t happens each May and September; you step outside and notice a pair of black bugs floating in tandem on the breeze. It may seem innocent, but it’s an ominous sign of what’s to come. Soon they’re everywhere—loitering outside your doorstep, harassing you at gas stations, and littering the roadways like a flurry of live snowflakes just waiting to decorate your windshield. We’re talking, of course, about lovebugs; and although lovebugs don’t sting or bite, the sheer number in which they swarm can make these semi-annual visitors an extreme public nuisance here in Florida.

Despite the persistent urban legend, these insects were not created in a lab and accidentally released upon the public. In actuality, Mother Nature can be more villainous than any mad scientist, and these bugs (flies technically—in case any entomology hobbyists are reading) have been making their way towards Florida since the 1940’s, where they were able to flourish in the absence of any significant predators.

But lack of predation isn’t the only factor contributing to their extraordinary numbers. The other is their unique mating habit; to wit, they mate almost non-stop...even as they fly (hence the romantic nickname).

During these nuptial flights, the females are attracted to heat as well as aldehydes, a major component of car exhaust. This is why it’s common to find so many along roadways and, of course, all over your car. More than just a nuisance, if left to dry for an extended period, they may even damage the paint. In fact, in some cases this automotive assault has been known to clog radiator fins to the point of overheating vehicles!

As if their seasonal imposition wasn’t bad enough, they’re also nearly impossible to control. Though insecticides will kill love-
Unlovable Love Bug... (Continued from page 1)

bugs when they’re sprayed directly, more will continue to float in right behind them.

The good news is that in the past 30 years, we’ve seen a continuing decrease in the severity of swarms here in Florida. There has been speculation among entomologists that this could be due to certain fungal pathogens controlling lovebug larvae populations. However, since it’s unlikely that we’ll ever be completely lovebug-free, we’ve provided a few helpful tips to help you get through the next visit from these amorous aerialists.

WEATHERING THE SWARM

- Try to avoid driving long distances during peak lovebug swarming hours (10-11 am and 6-8 pm).
- Install an automotive grill cover on your vehicle for each 3 to 4-week swarm season.
- Remove any dead lovebugs from your vehicle quickly to avoid possible damage to the paint.
- Keep doors and windows closed, especially during peak swarming hours.
- Avoid chemicals for the occasional lovebug you may find inside your home. Instead, try using a vacuum for a quick and safe removal.

Seasonal Reminders

With warmer weather on the way, we thought it’d be a great time for a few quick reminders about your lawn and irrigation system. As always, if you have any questions, call (352) 787-5300 or visit DeansServices.com!

Adjust Your Watering Frequency

This time each year, local water restrictions are adjusted to allow for more frequent watering. For more details, see our watering schedule online at DeansServices.com/news. Click on the 2014 4th Quarter issue.

Rely on Your Solar Sync

A SolarSync is an irrigation sensor (available on most models) used to detect conditions such as sun intensity, temperature, and rainfall. It then uses this information to adjust your irrigation schedules accordingly and reduce water waste. To prevent waste and pest problems associated with over-watering, simply set your system to water three times a week, and let your SolarSync automatically reduce watering as needed.

Check Your Irrigation Patterns

For those without our Irrigation Maintenance program, take a moment to run through each of your irrigation zones individually to ensure that no heads are clogged or obstructed by landscaping. Adjust any misaligned spray heads to ensure that all turf is being covered within each zone.

*Recommendations made by Deans are based upon what is required to keep your lawn at an optimum health level and do not consider factors such as local watering restrictions or utility charges. Adherence to such restrictions may affect turf appearance.
We touched on this in our recent edition of The Deans Buzz, but because our newsletters are now published bi-monthly, some of our customers may have missed our article on the subject. Also, it’s an important subject, especially since the rain and rising temperatures of spring can induce termite swarms; and, if the emerging winged termites are thought only to be flying ants…a very serious problem may continue unresolved.

While termite workers are easily distinguished from ants due to their white color, termite swarvers (which play a different role in the colony) appear black and are therefore easily confused with flying ant swarvers.

The easiest way to distinguish a termite from an ant swarver is by looking closely at the wings. While both have four wings, only the termites’ are all the same length. It may be difficult finding one with all four wings, since they’re readily lost shortly after flight, so check a few if you need to.

Next, look at the waist. The waist of an ant narrows to an incredibly thin proportion, by contrast, the termite’s waist is in line with the rest of its body. Use a piece of clear tape to secure a few of the insects if you have a hard time inspecting while they move.

Finally, look at their antennae. Termite antennae are straight and appear bead-like, whereas the ants’ has a distinct joint, or elbow, in the middle. You may need a magnifying glass to see this.

Of course, if you should suspect activity, don’t hesitate to call Deans for a positive identification, and if you haven’t already, we strongly recommend securing termite protection. Naturally, we’d love the opportunity to protect your home, but even if you don’t choose Deans, please be sure your home is protected. And if you’re currently with another company and wish to change, you’ll be pleased to know that converting your coverage is quick and easy.
Complete Pest Protection
Is Easy As . . .

Because Deans offers Termite Protection, Lawn & Shrub Care, and Home Pest Control, you can have all your pest control needs handled by one great company.

One call, one company....
One more reason to choose Deans.