



Green and Natural Pest Control with AAA Pest Control

by Judi Burton

They're lurking in the dark, deserted caverns of your walls. They skitter, crunch and scavenge. Some sting and some bite, piercing their tiny tusks into your bare skin as you sleep. They slither and sneak through deep, murky holes in your yard and chew through wires and walls. Some wait for you to turn on the light and then scurry across the floor,

over your toes, and into Lord knows which open box of cereal. Horrifying images of colonies of intruders taking over your kitchen—and your life—seep into your thoughts as you disdainfully eye a large one taking a dip in your commode. Goosebumps climb up your neck as your stomach churns and an earsplitting shriek works its way out of your throat to the alarm of anyone

within a mile's earshot. They are not only our least favorite part of nature, they are extremely difficult to control. Pests are on the move, and rising from their slumber in a house near you.

It's a Swamp "Thang"

Maybe you've never had to deal with a house full of unwanted guests. But here on the Strand and the Pee Dee, we're never far from a swamp, which means it's downright buggy and chock-full of all that is unpleasant when it comes to pests. We have chiggers, mosquitoes, spiders, snakes, moles, wasps, gators, fleas and more. Oh, and did I forget to mention fire ants? Those are nasty, too. One misstep, and you're covered. While poisoning these myriad of critters might be an easy answer, the problem is I have a healthy aversion to toxic chemicals. The last time, years ago, that I had a run-of-the-mill pest control guy come over, I saw him spray the floor right over my dog's food

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bowl. I won't mention the company, but he said something like, "This isn't harmful to your pets or you." However, when your dog vomits soon after your house has been treated, your trust in poisons as a pest-control solution vanishes.

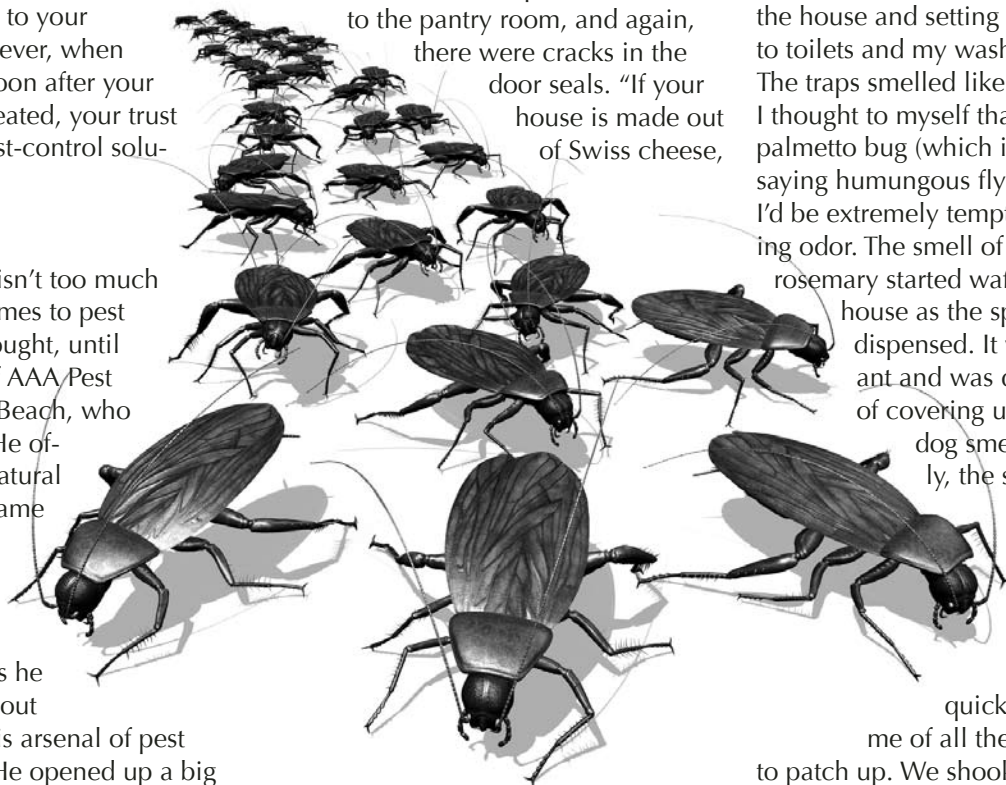
G.I. Joe

The thing is there isn't too much choice when it comes to pest control, or so I thought, until I met Joe Davis, of AAA Pest Control of Myrtle Beach, who has a rare niche. He offers organic and natural pest control. He came over to give me a couple of tips for a greener, more bug-free abode. I met him outside as he pulled up. He got out and showed me his arsenal of pest sprays and traps. He opened up a big jug and had me take a whiff. It smelled like really strong peppermint. He laughed and pointed to the ingredients. As my eyes stopped from tearing up, I could see the label and was shocked. It was rosemary and peppermint oil. "It's concentrated, so it's quite strong in the bottle," said Joe. He pulled out a belt with a spray gun in its holster and buckled it around his waist, preparing for war.

My House Is Swiss Cheese

As we approached my house, he realized he had done work on it before. Evidently, the property had a serious termite infestation. I had no idea. I certainly had never seen any signs of termites before, but I haven't been living here for very long. We walked around the perimeter of the house while he pointed out all the places that had been treated. It was quite extensive. When we walked in, he immediately spotted a problem at the front door. He closed the door and had me look at the cracks. "If you can see daylight, they will keep coming in." I am missing door seals, and the entire

door is slightly lopsided. I had no idea. He walked over to inspect the door to the pantry room, and again, there were cracks in the door seals. "If your house is made out of Swiss cheese,



I can't keep the bugs out no matter what I spray." He also pointed out that not only did I have a trashcan in front of the pantry door, but that I also was keeping recycling waste behind the same door. Common sense is such a slap in the face sometimes.

Plug it Up

He systematically went around examining all the places he spotted spiders, and found small cracks in the nearby windows. He even cleaned the lint out of the dryer vent flapper on the outside of the house. Evidently my lid was warped and lint was holding it open. "The greenest thing you can do is plug your holes. Take a stick of incense and burn it. Carefully watch where the smoke is going. If the smoke wafts toward or away from the window or door, you have a hole. This will make your home more energy efficient, as well as bug free." He pulled the trim ring around the plumbing to my toilet. There was a gaping hole behind that cap. I was a little amazed by this bug guru and a little annoyed that I hadn't thought of these things myself. I was also seeing my house in an entirely

new way, through the eyes of a bug. His assistant started spraying around the house and setting bug traps next to toilets and my washing machine. The traps smelled like peanuts, and I thought to myself that if I were a palmetto bug (which is a nice way of saying humungous flying cockroach), I'd be extremely tempted by that inviting odor. The smell of peppermint and rosemary started wafting through my house as the spray was being dispensed. It was quite pleasant and was doing a good job of covering up the house and dog smells. Unfortunately, the smell wouldn't last for very long, he informed me. Too bad, I kind of liked it. He wrapped up the visit quickly and reminded me of all the places I needed

to patch up. We shook hands, and he was on his way. Looking back, I wish I had asked him to come in the fall so he could have found all of the leaking holes in my house before the utility bills swallowed my Christmas money. Of course, summer will be here soon, so the project will just have to be added to my spring-cleaning list. I was impressed that he took the time to actually help me fix my problem rather than just slap a toxic Band-aid on it and schedule the next appointment, and then the next, and so on. You don't often find service people who offer advice that makes their continued work less necessary, and leave you satisfied rather than totally dependent on the constant visits. That takes character. For the record, it has been more than a week and I have not seen one unwanted guest. So, hallelujah, my old, leaky "Swiss cheese" house is bug free, for now.

For more info, contact Joe Davis, of AAA Pest Control of Myrtle Beach—serving the counties of Horry, Georgetown and Andrews—at 843-333-5790, or visit AAAPestControlOnline.com. See ad, page 42.