



## Uninvited Guests: Raccoons



Raccoons and other wild-life pests are a growing concern in urban areas like Philadelphia. Not only are they annoying and destructive, they can also carry diseases such as rabies.

Raccoons enter homes and other structures searching for food and shelter through loose siding or ventilation screens. Once inside, they can damage walls, insulation and electrical wires. Raccoons can also cause damage to gardens and shrubs in their search for food and potential den sites. In most cases, raccoons can be managed using IPM tactics that are safe and effective.

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## Reducing Pest Problems in Latino Communities



*Maria Gorgo-Gourovitch, PSCIP Latino community outreach coordinator*

A new PSCIP project will increase IPM awareness and knowledge in Spanish speaking communities in Philadelphia.

The project, funded by a Northeastern Region IPM Competitive Grants Program, will focus on Latino communities who experience negative health effects due to environmental hazards, including exposures to pests and pesticides.

In Pennsylvania, the Hispanic population has grown over 82 percent in the last ten years. According PSCIP Latino Coordinator Maria Gorgo-Gourovitch, 21

percent of Hispanics live below the poverty level and disproportionately inhabit sub-standard housing where pest problems and asthma are chronic. "Hispanics have a great unmet need for accessible IPM information, education and resources," she says.

In addition, the social, linguistic and economic disadvantages faced by many Hispanics leave them less able than other groups to understand and manage environmental hazards. In the case of pesticides, Hispanics often cannot read or understand the information on pesticide labels.

"Urban residents, facing cockroach or bed bug infestations, are desperate and may try to control pests with chemicals of all kinds," says Gorgo-Gourovitch. "Low-income neighborhoods often

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The first step is identifying what type of animal is causing damage to your property. Raccoons are approximately 2 to 3 feet long and weigh 10 to 30 pounds. Most recognizable is their black “mask” and their thick fur with alternating light and dark rings around its tail.

Raccoons are nocturnal and can eat both plants and animals. In urban settings, they feed on backyard fruits, nuts, and vegetables, as well as scavenge from garbage cans and compost piles. Pet food left outside overnight is another potential food source for raccoons.

Raccoons can be dangerous because they are known to carry a number of diseases and internal parasites. The raccoon roundworm, an infection spread to people by the accidental ingestion or inhalation of roundworm eggs from raccoon feces, can cause serious disabilities, and young children are thought to be most susceptible. Raccoons are also carriers of rabies.

To prevent raccoons from damaging your property, residents should reduce available food and shelter sites. Garbage containers kept outside should be metal with secure lids. To prevent raccoons from tipping over garbage cans, place the cans in a rack or tie them to a secure post. Pet food left outdoors should be removed before nightfall. Also, pick up fallen fruits and nuts frequently. Never intentionally provide food for raccoons or other wildlife, and discourage



*This raccoon ripped open the siding on this home where the garage roof and home meet.*

your neighbors as well; it only attracts more raccoons.

If possible, remove woodpiles or other materials raccoons can den in or under. Thin out overgrown shrubbery and trim it back from siding and windows. Tree branches that overhang rooftops should be cut back if possible, and trellises and arbors attached to homes should be removed to prevent easy access into homes.

Additionally, cover chimneys with a spark arrester that meets the fire code of your area. These caps will keep raccoons, tree squirrels, rats, and birds out of the chimney, but be sure they are tightly secured to prevent raccoons from pulling them loose. Open spaces beneath structures, such as porches, decks, and garden and tool sheds, should also be tightly screened with mesh fencing.

There are many devices on the market designed to frighten raccoons and other wildlife, but they typically only work for a few days until the animal realizes they pose no threat. There are a few commercial chemical repellents available for various wildlife as well, but none are effective for raccoons.

Dogs kept outdoors may alert you to the presence of raccoons and may frighten some away; however, some raccoons will attack dogs and cause serious injuries. Since they are usually active at night when they are most difficult to see, shooting is rarely the solution to nuisance raccoons, even in rural areas where shooting is legal.

If IPM tactics are not effective, residents might consider hiring a wildlife professional to trap the animal. Raccoons are intelligent and clever animals. They are also powerful and can be vicious when trapped or cornered. The professional will have the proper equipment to accomplish the task and will be able to tell if a trapped female is nursing its young. This is very important because you don't want to leave any raccoons behind that will need to be removed later.

For more information on wildlife pest control and a listing of licensed wildlife pest control professionals, see <http://extension.psu.edu/wildlife/wildlife-nuisance-and-damage>.

# Read the Label First

How often do you read the label of a product before you use it? In the case of pesticides, it's a necessity. In order to use the products safely, consumers must read the label before buying, mixing, applying, storing and disposing of pesticides.

The labels on pesticides are legal documents that manufacturers use to inform consumers about the product. Current pesticide regulations in the US require that all pesticides for sale are labeled with information specified by the EPA, including total percentage of active ingredients. Active ingredients are those chemicals that directly attack the targeted pest, while the so-called inert ingredients are added to help improve the mixture in effectiveness, storage and/or lifespan.

"For most over-the-counter pesticides, the inert ingredients comprise 95 to 99 percent of the total volume or weight of the pesticide. It does not, however, mean they are completely safe and non-toxic to people and the environment," says Lyn Garling, program manager of the Pennsylvania IPM Program. "Some inert ingredients are harmless, while others are considered active ingredients in other pesticides."

According to the EPA, many of the 2,000 plus inerts used in pesticides are classified as of 'probable, possible or unknown toxicological concern', which means we really don't know much about them or how they work together. "You cannot find out which inerts you are potentially exposed to by reading a pesticide label, the mix is a trade secret," says Garling. This makes it difficult or impossible to



determine what ingredients are actually included in different pesticide formulations.

In addition to the list of ingredients, pesticide labels include information on the types of pests it can control, EPA registration numbers and signal words such as "Caution", "Warning", "Danger" or "Danger/Poison". These signal words indicate the level of toxicity of the product, from slightly to highly toxic. The label also has directions on use, storage and disposal plus additional information on the product's special hazards to humans, domestic animals and the environment. "Remember, it is a violation of federal law to use any pesticide in a manner inconsistent with its labeling," Garling explains. "Always read the label and use pesticides as safely as possible when they are necessary."

Pesticides must also be disposed of safely. Empty or partially used bottles and containers should not be thrown away in the regular trash, instead they should be brought to a Philadelphia Household Hazardous Waste Collection Drop-off Event.

Household Hazardous Wastes (HHW) are those wastes produced in our households that are hazardous in nature, but are not regulated as hazardous waste, under federal and state laws. Included are such items as

old paints and paint related products, pesticides, pool chemicals, drain cleaners, degreasers and other car care products.

Pesticides and other HHW can be dropped off September 22 at 3rd District Highway Yard, 22nd Street & York Street. For more information on the HHW drop-off program and events, go to <http://www.philadelphiastreets.com/hazardous-waste-events.aspx> or contact the Streets Department's Customer Affairs Unit at (215) 686-5560.

For more information on how to choose a pesticide, read a pesticide label, and other pesticide safety information, see the PA IPM Program's Pesticide Use and Safety information page at <http://extension.psu.edu/ipm/resources/pestproblemsolver/public-health/pestusesafety>.

## PSCIP Offers Healthy Homes, Other Trainings



PSCIP, in partnership with the National Center for Healthy Housing (NCHH), conducts “Essentials of Healthy Housing for Practitioners” training courses.

This two-day foundation training course will help you understand the connection between health and housing, and how to take a holistic approach to identifying and resolving problems that threaten the health and well-being of residents. It is ideal for people who provide health or inspection services of any type. The training course materials are also available in Spanish.

PSCIP will be offering a free IPM training for multi-family housing on September 12, 8:30a.m.- 4:30p.m. It is open to multi-family property owners, managers, and maintenance staff; pest control operators; and multi-family housing residents. Attendees will learn how to implement IPM in their properties and homes. This free training is sponsored by the National Center for Healthy Housing and supported by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Office of Children’s Health Protection. Preregistration is required and can be completed at <http://www.nchh.org/Training/HealthyHomesTrainingCenter/TrainingPartners/PennState.aspx>.

PSCIP also offers other educational and hands-on training sessions on IPM for diverse audiences in varied environments and settings across Pennsylvania. PSCIP educational programs and train-the-trainer sessions can be tailored to meet the needs of your audience, and provide evidence-based information from basic to advanced. Educational programs and displays include:

- General IPM Overview
- IPM in the Curriculum
- IPM for Youth

Train-the-trainer sessions include:

- IPM for Housing Managers
- IPM for School Facility Managers
- IPM for Schools and Childcares
- Essentials of Healthy Housing for Practitioners
- IPM in Multi-family Housing
- Healthy Homes for Community Health Workers
- Healthy Air + Healthy Spaces = Healthy Children
- Pests, Pesticide and Children’s Health
- Pesticides and Alternatives: Reducing Health Risks Using IPM
- Facility Walk-through – A Pest’s Eye View
- Building Your IPM Plan for a Healthy, Pest-Free Environment
- IPM for Bedbugs (adaptable to homes, offices, schools, shelters)

Trainings are available in English and Spanish. For more information go to <http://extension.psu.edu/ipm/program/education-and-training> or contact the program at (215) 471-2200, Ext. 109, e-mail [pscip@psu.edu](mailto:pscip@psu.edu).

## Reducing Pest Problems (continued from page 1)

use local ‘exterminators’ of highly variable quality. Additionally, use of illegal pesticides is common in urban Latino communities. People do not even know about Poison Control emergency contacts, much less IPM.”

PSCIP plans to partner with Latino organizations in the Philadelphia area to access the community and assure that bilingual educational products developed reach the target audience and are effective.

PSCIP will translate and transform pre-existing IPM information and outreach to the Latino community via Spanish newspapers, television, and radio and social media. In addition, PSCIP will partner with Rutgers to create a video in Spanish with key IPM messages and “how-to” footage for pest identification, pest prevention, and safe pesticide use that can be embedded in presentations and put on YouTube.

For more information on the project, contact Gorgo-Gourovitch at [mag38@psu.edu](mailto:mag38@psu.edu) or (215) 471-2200. For more information on IPM in Spanish, go to the Pennsylvania IPM Program’s Spanish website at <http://extension.psu.edu/ipm/resources/espanol>.

# Reducing Asthma Disparities

*Excerpted from The White House  
Blog at <http://www.whitehouse.gov/blog/2012/07/05/reducing-asthma-disparities>  
by Tyra Bryant-Stephens, MD.*

As a primary care pediatrician and leader of the Community Asthma Prevention Program of the Children's Hospital of Philadelphia, I am very excited about the Coordinated Federal Action Plan the Obama Administration recently announced to reduce asthma disparities.

For years there have been a number of disparate efforts from various federal agencies to address asthma disparities; yet the gap in asthma-related emergency room visits, hospitalizations and deaths still exist. Asthma is a disease that is impacted by a host of environmental, health and social factors. Therefore it's no surprise that efforts made in a singular fashion have not worked in the past.

This Coordinated Federal Action Plan represents the coming together of 16 federal agencies to use their collective strengths to collaboratively and systematically reduce, and someday eliminate, asthma disparities.

This plan recognizes the importance of the community's involvement in efforts to reach disparate populations and the importance of collaboration among healthcare providers, community agencies, and social support systems. The following two strategies resonate with my experience in taking care of children with asthma.

## **The standardization of training and certification of Community**



*Droppings or body parts of cockroaches and other pests can trigger asthma.*

## **Health Workers (CHW) and use in care of at-risk asthmatics.**

The Community Health Worker is often the unsung hero in the frontline effort to intervene in the disproportionate burden of asthma on disadvantaged communities. These highly trained lay health educators are effective in working together with families to increase self-management skills and to remove asthma triggers as well as provide care coordination services.

CHW's are often the glue that connects caregivers to the healthcare system, community resources and social support systems and a key driver in community efforts to reduce asthma disparities. Given their important role in working with the most vulnerable populations suffering from the burden asthma places on their lives, standardization of curriculum and certification of CHW's is a necessary step in providing wrap around asthma care to reduce asthma disparities and asthma costs.

## **Promoting collaboration across all systems that serve children with asthma including health care, housing, schools and child-care settings**

While disseminating best

practices in implementing asthma guidelines is a step in improving overall asthma health outcomes, it is essential that the asthma care plan accompanies the child where they live, learn and play. Strategies toward this goal include: creating communication channels via federal interagency and private partnerships to provide comprehensive services to the people most affected by asthma; sharing data (including asthma care plans) between health care and school/childcare systems; and equipping federally qualified health centers and hospitals who serve disadvantaged populations to implement best practices.

The Coordinated Federal Action Plan provides guidance for approaching asthma disparities in a holistic fashion recognizing that patients live in the "real" world where their housing, health and education are all interconnected. Using all resources available and intervening in an integrated, collaborative manner will give us the greatest chance for finally closing the gap on asthma disparities.

For more information on asthma and asthma triggers, see the Pennsylvania IPM Program's brochure "Asthma, Pests and Pesticides" brochure at <http://extension.psu.edu/ipm/resources/factsheets/asthma-2.pdf/view>.

## Useful Web Sites

### PA IPM Program Blog

<http://extension.psu.edu/ipm/news>

### IPM in Multifamily Housing Blog

<http://stoppests.typepad.com/ip-minmultifamilyhousing/>

### EPA Toxic Release Inventory

<http://www.epa.gov/tri/>

### EcoWise Certified IPM Service Providers

<http://www.ecowisecertified.org/index.html>

### Pest Private Eye Game

<http://pested.unl.edu/pestpi>

### EPA's Bed Bug Information Clearinghouse

<http://www.epa.gov/opp00001/bedbugs/bedbug-clearinghouse.html>

## Upcoming Events

September 4, 2012, 1:30 - 3 p.m.

-- **Bedbugs Go to School Webinar Rebroadcast**,

<https://www1.gotomeeting.com/register/616296392>

September 12, 2012, 8:30 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.

-- **IPM in Multi-Family Housing Training**, US EPA Region III, Philadelphia, Pa.

<http://www.nchh.org/Training/HealthyHomesTrainingCenter/TrainingPartners/PennState.aspx>

September 22, 2012, 9 a.m. - 3 p.m.

-- **Household Hazardous Waste Drop-Off**, 3rd District

Highway Yard

22nd Street & York Street [http://](http://www.philadelphiastreet.com/hazardous-waste-events.aspx)

[www.philadelphiastreet.com/hazardous-waste-events.aspx](http://www.philadelphiastreet.com/hazardous-waste-events.aspx)

September 29, 2012, 10 a.m. - 4 p.m.

-- **Penn State's The Great Insect Fair**, Bryce Jordan Center, University Park, Pa.

<http://ento.psu.edu/public/kids/great-insect-fair>

## Asthma Toolkits Now Available

Asthma Toolkits from the Pennsylvania Asthma Partnership (PAP) are available as a downloadable PDF at [http://www.paasthma.org/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=60&Itemid=64](http://www.paasthma.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=60&Itemid=64).

PAP is a diverse multidisciplinary partnership of agencies, organizations, and individuals working to reduce the burden of asthma in Pennsylvania. PAP is managed by the PA American Lung Association and funded by the PA Department of Health through a cooperative agreement with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

There is no fee to join and members receive monthly newsletters and have the opportunity to participate on various workgroups. To read more about PAP, become a member, or utilize PAP's asthma resources, please visit <http://www.PAasthma.org> or find them on Facebook.

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The Pennsylvania IPM Program is a collaboration between Penn State and the Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture aimed at promoting integrated pest management in both agricultural and urban situations.