

Chamber member feature: BugStoppers

Technology helps fight brown recluse spiders

The local fight against brown recluse spiders can be easily blamed on area construction methods, but new pesticide technology may help in their control.

Brown recluse spiders are plentiful in Derby homes because they prefer and thrive in basements and crawlspaces, according to Les Seibert, owner of BugStoppers, a member of the Derby Chamber of Commerce. Spiders are also more difficult to control with traditional methods than other insects because they don't groom themselves by licking their legs and antenna.

Insects constantly lick their antenna and legs to see if they have stepped in something they can eat and therefore ingest pesticides that have been put down to control them. Brown recluse spiders, however, are hunters which roam around looking for an insect to eat and can walk through a pesticide without it being fatal because they are not going to lick it off their legs, Seibert said.

"Pesticide technology has changed over the last few years and there have been products developed that can kill spiders even though they don't groom like insects," he said.

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This new class of product is called microencapsulated pesticide. It works by encapsulating the pesticide in microscopic capsules which can be compared to little water balloons filled with pesticide.

As a spider or insect walks through this product some of the microcaps pop as they are stepped on and some of the microcapsules cling to the insect's or spider's body. Static electricity helps in this clinging effect – kind of like kids who rub balloons on their hair and then put them on the wall with static cling, Seibert said.

The exoskeleton of the spider is comprised of many sections or plates and as they move about the microcaps which have clung to them are crushed. That allows the



pesticide to work into the body, so even a spider that doesn't lick his feet can be controlled, he said.

"Brown recluse spiders can live over two years and can go without eating for six months, so even though technology has made great strides in control, all of the spiders will never be eliminated," he said. "So it's a good idea to look at the 10 things you can do to prevent brown recluse bites.

Top 10 ways to prevent spider bites

- Make sure nothing on beds comes in contact with the floor or the walls, such as dust ruffles, comforters, bed canopies, etc.
- When picking up piles of dirty laundry, don't hug it to your body. Pick it up piece by piece and put in a laundry basket.
- Wear gloves and a long sleeve shirt or jacket when cleaning up in garages or basements.
- Shake out shoes or clothing items that have been laying on the floor before putting them on.
- Shake out sporting items such as skates, baseball gloves and bike

helmets before putting them on.

- When moving or carrying firewood, wear gloves and a long sleeve shirt or jacket.
- Be careful when unpacking items that have been stored for long periods of time, like Christmas items, especially items stored in cardboard boxes.
- When possible, store items in plastic storage boxes with tight-fitting lids not in cardboard boxes.
- When possible store items on shelves, not on the floor.
- Eliminate clutter!