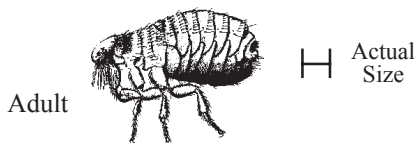


PEST CONTROL BULLETIN NO. 15

FLEAS



GENERAL INFORMATION

Wherever dogs, cats, or other furry pets are allowed inside the house, fleas may become a problem. Fleas will bite humans as well as domestic animals. Fleas feed on either animal or human blood and cannot breed or survive without it. Fleas require the blood of their respective hosts to produce viable eggs. Adult fleas can inflict painful and itching bites. The discomfort following the bite may last for several days to a week. So called "sand fleas" usually are cat flea species that have developed from eggs that were deposited outside of the house in either the lawn, sandbox, or flower bed.

HABITS AND BIOLOGY

The female flea usually lays her eggs on the pet (dog or cat). The eggs eventually fall off and hatch in places where the pet spends most of its time indoors. These places may include a chair, sofa, rug, carpet, and the pet's bed.

The larvae of fleas that hatch from the eggs normally will develop to maturity in two to three weeks. Larvae can be found in cracks in the floor and other hiding places. A home may become heavily infested with developing larvae before the infestation is noticed.

CONTROL

There are effective methods and chemicals available for the control of fleas. When purchasing a pesticide to control fleas, examine the label to be sure that it includes the words "for the control of fleas." It is also important to note the active ingredient in the product and the type of formulation you are purchasing. It is important to follow all instructions printed on the product label *to the letter*.

Fleas can be controlled either in or outside of the home by a combination of good housekeeping, sanitation, and the proper use of appropriate insecticides. Indoors, begin cleaning infested rooms by thoroughly vacuuming the carpeting, baseboards, and upholstered furniture. Then wet mop bare floors and other exposed surfaces with hot soap and water. The above cleaning recommendations are effective for either eliminating or destroying eggs and larvae. Following a thorough cleaning, pesticides designed for flea control can be applied to kill remaining eggs, larvae, adults, and even pupae.

Infested pets can be treated for fleas by proper application of commercially available products designed primarily to control the adult stage of the flea. Consult your veterinarian for advice on how to control the fleas infesting your pet.

Fleas in the yard and in pet areas (dog run outdoors) usually are controlled by a combination of keeping the area free of weeds and dense vegetation, and periodically applying appropriate insecticides. When applying pesticides to pet areas, be sure to remove all animals before treating and follow the instructions printed on the product label regarding pet exposure.

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In the event that pesticides are not appropriate or are ineffective in controlling the fleas, it is recommended that you contact a professional entomologist who specializes in the control of insects, mites, and other arthropod pests. Entomologists with this expertise are employed by the local agricultural commissioner or a reputable pest control company. Insecticides may be purchased at nurseries, hardware, farm supply, and pet stores.



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