

10 Tips to Keep Pests Out

Instead of waiting to go on the defense against an insect, rodent or bird that has entered your home, take the offense by implementing 10 steps to keeping pests out.

Exterior

The fewer pests you have feeding, harboring or breeding outside your home, the fewer issues you will have inside.

1. **Plants and Mulch.** Trim back any tree branches or shrubbery that touch your home to eliminate pest "bridges" to the house. Mulch, such as wood chips and pine straw, provide ideal harborage for pests. Instead of using these in areas that touch your foundation, place less pest-attractive ground cover, such as rock or stone.
2. **Doors and Windows.** Because pests can wiggle through tiny cracks and gaps, inspect and repair any ill-fitting, warped or broken doors and windows; check for and repair rips or tears in screens. A screen mesh size of at least 200 holes per square inch is generally available at home stores and is ideal for screening out pests.
3. **Cracks and Gaps.** Inspect the entire exterior of your home for other cracks, crevices and gaps through which pests could enter. Check for cracks in the foundation, loose siding, missing roof shingles, and gaps around incoming utility lines, including pipes, electric and cable wiring. Seal any openings with copper mesh, coarse steel wool, sheet metal or mortar. Expanding caulk is less applicable as many pests can chew through it.
4. **Trash and Litter.** Keep yards, patios, decks and garages free of litter, weeds and standing water. Ensure trash cans have tight-fitting lids, and clean the cans and area regularly to remove debris and spills, on which pests can feed.
5. **Lights.** To reduce flying insects around doors and windows, replace standard mercury vapor lights with high pressure sodium vapor or halogen lights. Bulbs that have pink, yellow or orange tints will be least attractive to the flying insects. Although it is common to place lights on exterior walls near doors, it is better to place the light farther away, using pole lights when possible, with the light shining toward the door for safety.



Interior

Eliminating conditions in your home that appeal to pests will help reduce the attraction that brings them in.

6. Interior Gaps. Some cracks and gaps will be visible only from inside your home. Check in, under and behind kitchen cabinets, refrigerators and stoves, as well as between the floor and wall juncture and around pipes, floor and dryer vents. Seal any gaps found, especially those of 1/4 inch or greater.

7. Drains. Sink and floor drains often accumulate gunk and debris which can attract pests and provide an ideal breeding site, especially for small flies. Inspect and maintain all sink, tub, basement and laundry room floor drains.

8. Recycled Items. It is preferable to store recyclables outside and away from your home. If this is not possible, ensure that all containers are thoroughly rinsed and that the recycling bin has a tight-fitting lid. All recycling and trash containers should also be rodent proof and cleaned frequently.

9. Stored Foods. If opened bags and boxes cannot be completely closed, the food should be put into a resealable bag or plastic container to keep from attracting stored product (or "pantry") pests. Using older foods first and cleaning out stale or uneaten foodstuffs will also keep attractants down.

10. Cleanliness. The cleaner your home, the less attraction it will have for pests, the less chance a pest will have to live and breed – and the less likely it will be that you would need to go on the defense and pull out a can of bug spray or call Nix Termite (844) BUG-HELP.

