

Winter Wind Down

As the warm weather subsides and winter takes its hold, the number of insect specimens that are submitted by clients has suddenly approached zero. This is normal for this time of year. We do get a few spider specimens that have invaded homes, but even those are seeking shelter to hibernate throughout the cold season.

The Insect Committee had some very full days in October and November, sometimes looking at 10-15 submissions by clients seeking answers to “buggy” questions. One of the more challenging submissions came into the office with a pair of pants stuffed into a plastic ziplock bag. The intake form simply said “please identify”.

Well, you can imagine our trepidation about specimens in clothes with no idea of what we would find! We decided to freeze the pants until our next meeting, effectively killing any specimens that were present. After speaking with the client, we discovered that small insects had entered the pants while being stored. After the freeze we shook the pants into a white plastic bag and found minute specimens (dead, of course) that, when put under the microscope, turned out to be tiny ants. Now, how do you call and tell a client that they have “ants in their pants”??? Especially with a straight face!!

The Insect Committee will take a hiatus from meetings during the holiday seasons and will re-meet in March of '08. We certainly appreciate the support that all of you have given to our insect group throughout the year. Your efforts to identify specimens and make recommendations certainly helped us in completing our task of serving our customers.

We are hoping to see some experienced MG's as well as members of the new MG training class interested in joining the Insect Committee next year. The committee has mulled over the idea of offering an Advanced Insect Identification Training next year in September. This training has not been offered for 2 years, so it is time to do it again. The class consists of two days of training, lab work, and lots of information. We have gotten inquiries from other counties and also from our own MG's regarding the class and when it will be scheduled again. Watch for announcements during the summer of next year.

We hope you enjoy your holidays and have a safe and prosperous New Year.

