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# Early Spring?

## Time to Ring Patriot Pest Solutions

By Kathy Hunt

If you looked out the window or stepped outside this past February, you may have spotted bluebirds flitting from bare branch to bare branch, groundhogs loping across half-frozen lawns, and mosquitoes floating along in the brisk air. There was only one explanation for these unseasonal sightings — spring came early this year.



**JAMES AND DENICE HARRISON**





*Patriot Pest Solutions' technicians are state-licensed and specially trained in humane squirrel trapping, removal and exclusion services.*

While many love the warmer days that a premature spring brings, no one gets excited about the return of flies, ants, and other nuisances that largely hibernate during the cold winter months. Unfortunately, milder winters and warmer summers result in longer seasons for insects, including black-legged or deer ticks, which carry the bacteria that causes Lyme Disease, and mosquitoes. The latter are transmitters of harmful viruses such as West Nile and Eastern Equine Encephalitis. With 2024 ranking as the hottest year in recorded history, according to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, and scientists predicting that 2025's temperature patterns will be similar, you can expect to see more bugs outdoors and inside.

Instead of fiddling with bug zappers, fly swatters, and bowls of vinegar, lemon juice, or coffee grounds, the most efficient and effective way to combat these pests is to contact the professionals at Patriot Pest Solutions. This



woman-owned and veteran-owned business has been keeping pests at bay in Southeastern Pennsylvania for over 14 years.

"Homeowners have to expect an early spring. As soon as they start seeing signs of insects that they don't want inside their homes, they should call because it's only going to get worse," Denice Harrison said. Harrison is the co-owner of Patriot Pest Solutions, 156 West Ridge Pike in Limerick. The business supports customers in Berks, Bucks, Chester, Delaware, Montgomery, and Philadelphia counties.

### **Controlling ticks and other insect infestations**

Due to the warmer weather, entomologists anticipate that 2025 will be an especially bad year for ticks. "We've not had the normal winter season for them to die off," Harrison said. "This will be a horrendous year for ticks."

Multiple frigid days where the temperature is at or below 14 degrees Fahrenheit can kill off black-legged ticks burrowing in leaf piles, grasses, shrubs, and shaded areas. During weeks where the temperature fluctuates between below- and above-freezing or stays above 32 degrees each day, ticks not only survive but also thrive. Go into the woods or your yard on a warm winter day and you could end up with a tick clinging to your pants, sock, or worse — attached to your skin, spreading germs as it feeds off your blood. As white-tailed deer and white-footed mice lose more habitat and begin bedding down in suburban yards, we can expect increased encounters with ticks, which travel on these animals.

To combat ticks, Patriot Pest Solutions has devised a year-round prevention plan. After inspecting a property and identifying tick hot spots, the licensed technician creates a treatment plan using effective, environmentally-conscious measures. Patriot Pest's remediation and prevention plans ensure that ticks go away and stay away.



*Chris Gentile – Bed Bug and Spotted Lantern Fly Specialist*

Along with ticks, Patriot Pest has a six-month, organic mosquito-control plan that is similarly safe and cost-effective. Service begins in May and ends after October. During this time, the customer's patio, porch, foliage, vegetation, and other outdoor locations are kept mosquito-free. Treatments can be carried out at homes, apartments, hospitals, long-term care facilities, and other residential or commercial sites.

As part of the mosquito plan, a technician will evaluate the customer's living or workspace and suggest ways to minimize the risk of swarms. One approach would be to remove any standing water, which is the mosquito's breeding ground.

In addition to ticks and mosquitoes, Patriot Pest Solutions has treatment plans for ants, fleas, termites, cockroaches, bedbugs, stinkbugs, and spotted lanternflies.

*(Continued on page 8)*



*James is an associate certified entomologist and a member of the National Pest Management Association.*





Licensed entomologist, James Harrison, holds weekly meetings to discuss cases and train his technicians on the latest techniques in pest management.

“We customize our plans to meet each situation and each person’s needs,” Harrison said.

If they bite, sting, swarm, damage property, or simply are a constant source of aggravation, Patriot Pest has the solution.

“Pest control is fluid and our methods need to be as well,” Harrison said. “There’s always a different thing. Think back 10 years or so, when stink bugs were terrible. We don’t get calls very often for them now. Three years ago, we were invaded by the spotted lanternfly. There are still a few patches of spotted lanternflies throughout the counties but it’s not like it was. They’ve moved on. With each new pest, we have to gear up and work with the Department of Agriculture to make sure that we have the training and are properly licensed and certified to handle the problem,” she said.

## Keeping pests out of homes and businesses

Patriot Pest supports both residential and commercial clients. For residential clients, it has a Home Pest Protection plan, which consists of an initial assessment and three service visits scheduled throughout the year. Should pests appear in between service calls, a technician will perform a free, emergency treatment. Patriot Pest employs a combination of long-lasting materials, baits, and traps placed around the interior and exterior of a home. These are the same low-odor, low-toxicity



products that it uses in schools, hospitals, and other high-traffic sites.

Often, animal lovers express concern about how pest control will impact their pets. These products may not harm people, but dogs, cats, guinea pigs, and other animal family members are smaller and seem more vulnerable than humans.

Customers shouldn’t worry about their pets becoming ill from or harmed by a Patriot Pest treatment. “We’re pet owners and we love our dogs,” Harrison said. “We want to make sure we keep other people’s pets safe, too.”

The concern for safety and welfare applies to commercial clients, too. These customers include industrial warehouses, hospitals, hotels, office buildings, restaurants, retail stores, and schools. As with its Home Pest Protection plan, a fully-insured, qualified technician

will assess the situation and prepare a treatment plan that fits the setting and needs.

Commercial clients should understand the importance not only of identifying the need for but also staying on top of pest control. Patriot Pest’s website points out the following: “Seeing a single ant, cockroach, or flea means there are many more waiting to be discovered. Spot treatment with over-the-counter sprays may kill the bugs you see, but only a trained pest control professional can eliminate your pest problems once and for all.”

Along with ant, cockroach, and flea plans, Patriot Pest offers bed bug remediation and prevention through heat, steam, and chemical treatments. It likewise provides in-ground and above-ground termite inspections and remedies. The latter eradicate subterranean termite colonies and stop infestations before serious wood damage can occur. Generally, termite damage is not covered by commercial or homeowner’s insurance policies. These destructive insects are deemed to be a preventable problem, one that should be addressed and managed with routine pest service.

Additionally, Patriot Pest has commercial rodent and wildlife control programs, vegetation management, and bioremediation of fats, greases, and oils in commercial kitchens. Initial consultations and estimates are free. Members of Spring Ford, and Perkiomen Valley Chambers of Commerce receive a discount on services. Patriot Pest belongs to the Phoenixville and Perkiomen Valley Chambers of Commerce.





## When birds, deer, and other wildlife get too close

Sometimes, insects aren't the issue. Instead, it's feathered, scaled, or furry creatures such as birds, squirrels, and raccoons. With this spring's early arrival, people can expect to see birds nesting much sooner. One inconvenient spot where house sparrows, starlings, and blackbirds choose to build homes are roof, exhaust, and dryer vents.

"If we go to a home or building and find an empty nest, the technician will remove it, sterilize the area, and cover the vent with a grate," Harrison said. "But, if the tech finds babies in the nest, he doesn't touch them. Instead, he leaves the nest alone and returns after the babies have left. Then, he takes out the nest and covers the vent."

People have become more proactive about birds, Harrison said. Many will have Patriot Pest install vent grates before or at the very beginning of nesting season. The cost of this precautionary measure is minimal.

In addition to humanely removing Birds from homes, Patriot Pest clears out rodents such as mice, moles, voles, rats, and squirrels, raccoons, groundhogs, skunks, opossums, and foxes. They also take care of bats and snakes!

"We have a schedule of when squirrels, raccoons, and other animals are having babies," Harrison said. "Sometimes, we even find baby raccoons in someone's attic, which is a real challenge but one we take on."

Patriot Pest's technicians are licensed with the Pennsylvania Game Commission, National Wildlife Control Operators Association, and the Pennsylvania Trappers Association. They are likewise fully insured. The wildlife removal and exclusion plan that they use was created by business co-owner and military veteran James Harrison.

To stay on top of consumer needs, Patriot Pest anticipates introducing a new and highly desired offering to the region — deer repellent. Suggested by Patriot Pest technician and wildlife specialist Eric Gromalski, the treatment plan would discourage deer from devouring trees, shrubs, and other vegetation on the customer's property. Harrison stated that Valley Forge residents have been particularly susceptible to herds of deer demolishing their shrubs.



**Lynda Smiley is our Office Manager and we are celebrating her Ten Year Anniversary this month!**



"As a business owner, you have to fan the flame of interest with your employees," Harrison said. "When a technician comes in, mentions a customer needs a certain service, has researched the service, and asks if we can do it, we need to look into it and move on it. That's what we want. We want our staff to have an interest and new ideas. We can't be complacent."

The new service would involve spraying a solution on the greenery that makes it unappetizing to deer and forces the animals to look elsewhere for food.

"When you look at the cost of replacing shrubs, it's thousands of dollars. Our service will have a small, green footprint and be convenient and cost-effective," Harrison said.

## Making service convenient and appealing for customers

To make scheduling, payments, and pest control even easier for its customers, in 2024, Patriot Pest added an online customer portal to its website. Clients simply click on "My Account" at the top right corner of the Patriot Pest homepage — <https://www.patriotpestsolutions.net> — and sign in to their accounts. If they're new to the portal, they can sign up for online account access by entering their phone number and either their email address or billing account number. Once they're logged in, customers can quickly and securely add or update payment information, view and print invoices, and download payment receipts. They can also manage account settings and update information online.

Understanding that, in today's busy world, many people prefer to text instead of phoning or emailing, customers can now text to arrange an appointment. Texting is done through the customer portal.



Anyone who does call Patriot Pest speaks with either Quinn Schadler or Linda Smiley, who has been with the company for 10 years.

"Over our 14 years in business, we've come to realize that easily 70 percent of our customer base and call-ins, both residential and business, are women," Harrison said. "My office manager, Linda, is so empathetic and has all this experience and knowledge. I get tons of Google reviews about how she and Quinn are so helpful and knowledgeable, and how 'I was so stressed but after that call, I felt so much better.' And it's because of them," she said.

She added that it's important to acknowledge that Patriot Pest Solutions is co-owned by a veteran, her husband James, but it is also co-owned by a woman, and the office is staffed by women.

Those interested in additional information about or to schedule a consultation, visit Patriot Pest Solution's website at <https://www.patriotpestsolutions.net>. You can also contact the business by email at [info@patriotpestsolutions.net](mailto:info@patriotpestsolutions.net) or by phone at 610.489.5136.