

Time to call the exterminator, or not!

Are you tired of waking up every morning to find one or two cockroaches crawling over your dining table? Or worse, on top of your cutlery, jug, or glass?

Have you had enough of those nuisance mosquitoes 'humming' near your ears even inside a mosquito net? Does a whole army of ants come and gather on your floor when just a small piece of food hits the ground?

If yes, then you are in desperate need of pest control.

Whether we notice and realise it or not, almost everyone has some pest or the other present in their house and office, and most of us do not pay much heed to controlling them. But, everyone should try their hand at controlling them because most pests are not only irritating, but carriers of various diseases.

First off, let us have a look at some of the most common pests that infiltrate our homes and offices.

Flies — whether they are houseflies or fruit flies, they carry a wide range of microbes that can cause diseases like diarrhoea and food poisoning.

Bed bugs — these are not only found on beds, but also in cracks and crevices in the walls and floor. They feed on human blood and spread very quickly.

Ants — ant nests are often located on lawns, in warm, dry soil and under pavings.

Rats and mice — they are notorious for transmitting many diseases.

Termites — they wear away wooden structures and furniture, and may cause damage worth thousands!

Cockroaches — they mostly live in warm and dark corners of buildings, and feed on and contaminate human food.

Mosquitoes — without a doubt, this is one of the biggest bane of every household. Not only do they bite you and give you itchy rashes, they are also the carriers of pathogens of diseases like malaria, dengue, hemorrhagic fever, etc

CONTROLLING THE MENACE

While there can be many different approaches to control pests at home and office, here are some easy, but efficient tips that can be followed to curb their numbers.

Rats and mice

Be careful with how you store food and scraps.

Keep food in sealed containers and clean up any spills or crumbs. As rats need a reliable water source, make sure you have no leaks in your pipes or faucets. Keep your garbage-can lids on tight.

Store grass seed and bird seed in sealed containers. If you have a dog, do not leave food out for it, as rats will eat whatever is in the bowl. It is also important to seal up any cracks, holes, or entry points. Another way to kill rats is opting for the old, conventional way — using baits!

Add some sort of rat poison to food and leave it out in the open for the mice to eat, and then, eventually die.

Rats do not like the smell of peppermint. You can put some peppermint oil on cotton balls and place them at the entry points and other nooks you think can be cosy abodes of these tiny critters.

Repeat every few days to keep them at bay. And the great advantage is that your house will smell fresh all the time!

Sprinkle instant potatoe powder everywhere you think the rats are likely to frequent. The rats will eat the powder, but the potato flakes will swell up in the intestines of the rodents, killing them eventually.

Another item that can be used is onions. Not just you, but even the rats hate the pungent smell of onions. But this hack is a little tricky since onions rot quickly and can be toxic to pets at home. You would need to replace the onion every second day with a fresh one.

Termites

Apply soapy water over the termites. This makes their outer shell impermeable, thus damaging their respiratory system. Clove oil and canola oil help to keep termites at bay. Another very good control item is boric acid. It affects the nervous system of termites. Moreover, if your furniture that has been invaded by termites is small or quite light and movable, put it under sunlight.

Termites cannot tolerate high temperature and will eventually die. Watch out for your wooden structures at home. If they are

about to wear out or have any sort of damage remove them from the house.

In addition, be careful of not to let any moisture, like water dripping from air conditioners, accumulate on wood. This dampens the wood and attracts termites.

Cockroaches

Sprinkle baking soda in dark corners of the house, where the roaches will find and feed on them. You can also add sugar to attract the roaches. The baking soda will react with the acid in the pests' stomach and eventually kill them. Boric acid can be used as well. You can also keep bay leaves in the dark corners of your house. Bay leaves are natural roach repellent — they simply loath the smell of bay leaves!

Citrus fruits like lemons and oranges can be used to kill roaches. The anti-pathogenic properties of citrus foods, will keep roaches away.

Flies

There is good news for those who have a soft spot for gardening, because growing some sort of plants help to keep flies at bay and stop them from flying into your house. Plants like basil, bay leaf, lavender, and mint — all are fly-repellent. So, you can get on with your hobby and stop flies entering your house at the same time. Another clever way to keep flies away is by covering sweet food items, especially organic fruits, as flies are strongly attracted to these.

Ants

Baking soda, boric acid, vinegar, citrus fruits, etc, can all be used to kill ants. Cucumber can also be used. Ants are naturally averse to the taste of cucumber. Bitter tasting cucumbers are the best, but you can always rely on normal cucumbers as well. The only downside is that you will have to replace with fresh peels every alternate day and continue the procedure till all the ants have disappeared. Dish soap works wonders to eliminate ants. It suffocates them and ruptures their cells, causing them to dehydrate and die. Just mix one teaspoon of liquid dish soap and baking soda each in a bowl of water. Mix well and spread the



solution along the

areas where you see the ants entering. You can also spray over trails of running ants; just make sure to mop up the dead ants with a damp cloth after some time.

You can also use the ultimate weapon of home pest control- garlic. Garlic is indomitably the Holy Grail of natural pest removal. This quirky little herb is not only great for your health but also effective in driving off all kinds of bugs and ants from your home. Ants cannot stand the smell of garlic, so just place two peeled cloves of fresh garlic at the entry points of your home, or near the abode of the ants.

Mosquitoes

Aerosol sprays are the most convenient way to kill mosquitoes. Make sure you have no stagnant water source near your house, as these act as breeding grounds for mosquitoes. Garlic can be used as well to keep mosquitoes away. And most importantly, keep a mosquito racket near you all the time when you are at home.

The conventional pesticides that are found at stores, usually in powder or spray form can be used too. But the use of above mentioned natural remedies should be encouraged, especially if you have kids or pets at home. They may unintentionally come in contact with the powder pesticides, and be affected. Moreover, these artificial poisons may affect humans of all ages if exposed to for too long.

By Faiza Khondokar
Photo: Collected

First Car Free Friday of 2019

September 22, has been observed as 'World Car Free Day' in Bangladesh for quite some time. In continuation of the events, first Fridays of every month are special because they are observed as 'Private Car Free Manik Mia Avenue'.

The event was organised by Surf Excel, Dhaka Transport Coordination Authority (DTCA), and Dhaka Metropolitan Police (DMP).

On 4 January, two hundred metres of Manik Mia Avenue Road was closed for traffic, between 8 AM to 11 AM with the perfect backdrop of the National Parliament

Building.

The monthly event aims to reduce traffic congestion, and carbon emission and its footprint left by daily commute of private cars and public transportation. It strengthens the community feeling, as everyone gathers under an umbrella — a common cause, every Friday to contribute to the wellness of our environment; our health.

Surf Excel, DTCA and DMP, through the Car Free Day, works together to guarantee that the future generation will learn values of taking care of our roads and environment.

The 200-metre play zone for the Car Free Day participants include numerous activities like painting, life-sized chess boards, badminton, and basketball. The organisers provided the sports equipment to the children.

For toddlers, there was a playpen, see-saws, playground rocking horses and slides that the children really enjoyed. A small section was set aside for classical dance performances.

While the Private Car Free Manik Mia Avenue even had a specific age group in mind, people of all ages takes part in physi-

cal exercises, and there are women who take the pleasure of riding their bicycles on a free road.

The event gave families a chance to spend a morning together, busy with outdoor activities. The Car Free Friday event also gave children a chance to make new friends.

Needless to say, it was an incredible way to start the first Friday of the year.

By Sanumkia Siddiqui
Photo: Surf Excel/Unilever Bangladesh Ltd