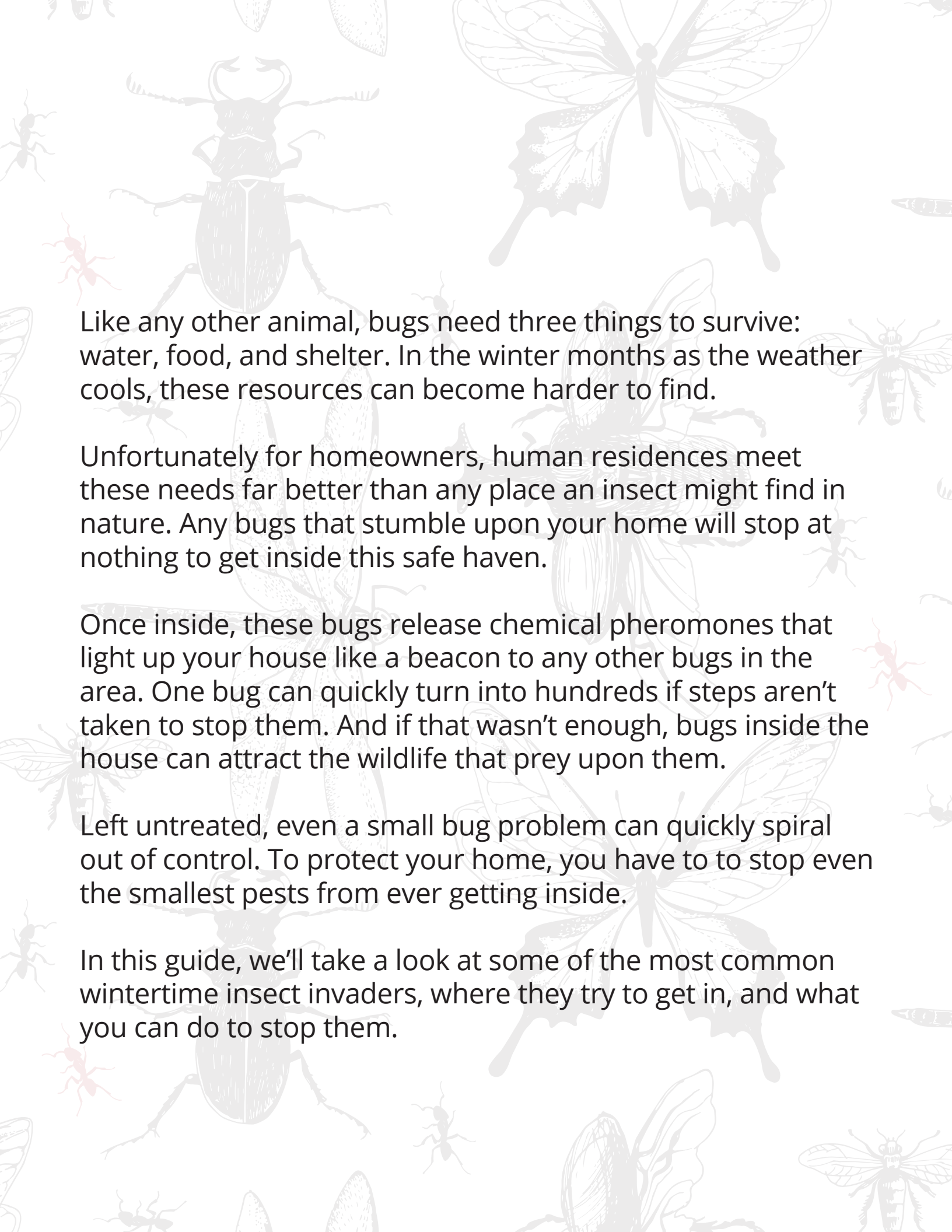




**HOW TO STOP  
BUGS FROM  
MAKING YOUR  
HOUSE THEIR  
WINTER HOME**

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*Breda*  
PEST MANAGEMENT



Like any other animal, bugs need three things to survive: water, food, and shelter. In the winter months as the weather cools, these resources can become harder to find.

Unfortunately for homeowners, human residences meet these needs far better than any place an insect might find in nature. Any bugs that stumble upon your home will stop at nothing to get inside this safe haven.

Once inside, these bugs release chemical pheromones that light up your house like a beacon to any other bugs in the area. One bug can quickly turn into hundreds if steps aren't taken to stop them. And if that wasn't enough, bugs inside the house can attract the wildlife that prey upon them.

Left untreated, even a small bug problem can quickly spiral out of control. To protect your home, you have to stop even the smallest pests from ever getting inside.

In this guide, we'll take a look at some of the most common wintertime insect invaders, where they try to get in, and what you can do to stop them.

# THE USUAL SUSPECTS

When it comes to winter bug exclusion, certain pests are more likely to try to invade than others. Here are some of the most common bugs that might try to break into your home this winter, and why you need to keep them out.

## ANTS



While ants in the outdoors will overwinter in order to survive the colder temperatures, the heat of your home allows them to remain active. Once inside, they survive by foraging for any unprotected food they can find.

## ROACHES



The search for food, water, and a warm place to hide pushes many roaches into people's homes once temperatures cool. Like ants, these nocturnal pests will feast upon and contaminate any food sources they can find.

## TERMITES



Termites are one of the most dangerous pests threatening any home, as the damage from their foraging can cripple the foundations leading to costly repairs that can climb into the thousands.

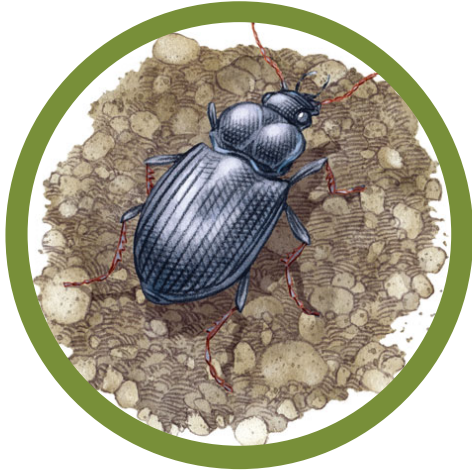
## SPIDERS



While spiders are beneficial in that they keep other bug populations down, they are best kept as neighbors and not housemates as the venom in their fangs can be harmful and even deadly depending on the species.



## BEETLES



Beetles generally do not bite humans directly, but they can still wreak havoc inside the home. Depending on the species, they are known to tear up wool and fabrics, break into food products, damage wood, and more.

## STINK BUGS



Stink bugs love the smell of pumpkin juice, and often find their way in around Halloween. The bane of anyone with a strong sense of smell, these bugs are best known for the chemical they release when crushed, which emits a foul odor and can leave damaging marks on any surface it touches.

## BOXELDER BUGS



Boxelder bugs leave their native boxelder trees in the late fall in search of warm habitats. Like stink bugs, they leave damaging stains when crushed, and have also been known to congregate around HVAC units, limiting their effectiveness and, in large numbers, potentially causing them to overheat.

# COMMON ENTRY POINTS & PROBLEM AREAS

While no two pest infestations are the same, there are a few key areas throughout the home that present a bigger risk than others. Inspect your home for any signs of pest invasion, and pay close attention to these common entry points and problem areas.

## **KITCHEN**

The kitchen provides bugs with easy access to food and water, making it one of the most common areas for bug sightings. Be on the lookout for torn food packaging as well as bug droppings, both of which indicate infestation.

## **BATHROOMS**

The bathrooms in a home are another hot spot for bug activity due to the water present. Lookout for roaches on the floor or tub and ants in or around the sink.

## **ATTIC**

While the attic is always at risk of insect infestation, it can become even more attractive in the winter as the excess heat from downstairs rises, creating a warm and inviting habitat for bugs. Look out for any damage to cardboard boxes, newspapers, other paper products stored upstairs.

## **WINDOWS**

The windows are a common point of entry for many bugs. Inspect the windows in your home for any cracks or holes, as well as for jamming when being opened and closed, as these all present potential bug entryways.

## **BASEMENT**

The moisture that builds up in the basement can make it a hotspot for insect activity. Look for any chipping or broken concrete and replace where possible, and consider getting a dehumidifier for this area.

## **GARAGE**

If you store garbage cans or other litter in your garage, it can become tempting to any bugs that stumble across it. Unsecured cat and dog food can also provide a rich food source, especially for ants.

## **ELECTRONICS**

For bugs small enough to get inside, electronic items like laptops and gaming systems present a cozy hideaway. Watch for trails of ants or for roaches moving to and from any electronic devices in the home.

## **PIPES**

The water that drips off of leaky pipes can attract thirsty bugs looking for a water source. Ensure any openings around pipes entering the home are properly sealed; caulk if necessary.

## **CLUTTER**

As a general rule, a dirty home attracts more bugs. Any discarded boxes, magazines, newspapers, or other clutter throughout the home can all serve as potential resting places for bugs, so after you've checked all the biggest potential problem areas don't forget to do a deep clean of the entire home.

## **HVAC UNITS**

HVAC units can become a safe haven for numerous outdoor insects, especially swarms of stink bugs and boxelder bugs, which can damage these systems and even cause them to overheat.

## **BUSHES & SHRUBS**

Many insects make their homes in bushes and shrubs naturally. If they're placed in close enough vicinity to the home, don't be surprised if insects use them as a launching point to reach your home's siding and from there find a way into the home itself.

## **ROOF**

Once a bug has climbed onto the siding of the home, if it can find a hole in the roof (or make one), it's only a matter of time before your attic comes under infestation. Inspect your roof's siding thoroughly for any signs of damage, as holes here can potentially let in far worse pests than just bugs - namely wildlife such as mice, rats, squirrels, and bats.

## **OUTSIDE CLUTTER**

As with the inside of your home, there's nothing bugs love more than a cluttered yard to take up residence in. Old boxes, tires, discarded toys, and the like can all become potential nesting grounds for bugs to ride out the winter in.

## **FIREWOOD & COMPOST**

If you're planning on burning firewood for warmth this winter, keep in mind that bugs love to use firewood and compost piles as makeshift nests. Any time you bring firewood inside, you could inadvertently bring in ants, roaches, and termites with you.

## **SIDING**

On bright days, many bugs are known to warm themselves up by congregating on sun-facing walls and siding. If you spot heavy presence of insects like boxelder bugs on days like these, it can be a strong indicator that they've made a nest somewhere nearby or inside the home.

## **GARBAGE CANS**

Garbage cans are another area that bugs are likely to congregate around. Humans may take for granted that, no matter if it's old or rotten to us, it still looks like a feast to the average bug, and unsealed garbage cans and trash bags are easy pickings for ants and roaches.

# **5 STEPS HOMEOWNERS CAN TAKE TO ELIMINATE BUGS IN THE HOME**

Now that you know how bugs might be getting into your home and what to be on the lookout for, you can take matters into your own hands to help put a stop to the bugs looking to make your house their winter home. These are some steps you can take to get you started.



# 1

## SEAL ENTRY POINTS

The best way to eliminate any home pest infestation is always to prevent it from happening in the first place.

Seal interior areas like window frames, door frames, baseboards, cable and utility penetrations, and so on with a silicone caulk or similar material. For exterior holes on vents, the roofline, HVAC units, and so on, use steel wool or a steel wire mesh both to keep bugs out and to stop bigger critters like rats from gnawing their way inside. The same goes for

As an added bonus, keeping everything sealed tight will also prevent excess heat from escaping your home, saving you money on the heating bill.

Just keep in mind that if you're already experiencing a severe infestation, sealing holes without eliminating the source of the problem first will only trap the bugs inside. Likewise, actually sealing every point an ant or similarly-sized creature might get into can be difficult if not impossible for the average homeowner, so it might be best to bring a professional on board.

# 2

## KEEP IT CLEAN

After preventing them from getting inside at all, the next best method of keeping your home bug-free is to make it as unappealing to them as possible. Remember that insects break in looking for food and shelter, so if your home doesn't present these resources, they'll have less incentive to try to get inside.

Clean dishes thoroughly after every meal and safely dispose of any leftover food items. Keep food stored throughout your house (including pet food) in sealed plastic containers and store in the refrigerator if possible as an additional layer of defense.

Dispose of any clutter inside or outside the home that could provide a safe hiding place. Store firewood on a raised platform at least 20 feet away from the home, and cover with a tarp to keep it dry, making it less inviting to termites and other moisture-loving bugs.



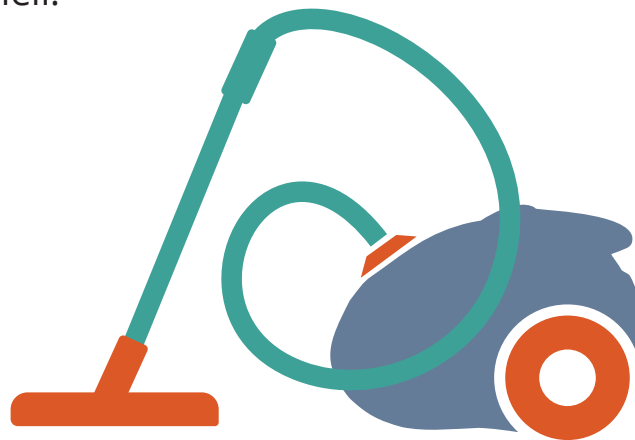


# 3

## ELIMINATE ODOR TRAILS

Very rarely will one bug get into your home without bringing the family along as well. Foraging insects like ants and termites will leave chemical trails behind that their fellow bugs can follow, meaning that one invader can quickly turn into hundreds if not treated.

Along with regular cleaning, wipe down floors, cupboards, and countertops with vinegar. In addition to disinfecting, vinegar will block the odors left by the trails, and ants hate the smell.



# 4

## VACUUM REGULARLY

Vacuum your entire house at least once a week. In addition to removing crumbs and other food items you might have missed in your initial cleaning, vacuuming can also lift up small bugs like ants taking refuge in carpet fibers.

Part of the problem with insects like stink bugs and boxelder bugs is the chemicals they release when crushed, so vacuuming carries the added benefit of allowing you to collect them and dispose of them without staining the floor or spreading the pungent odor throughout your home.



# 5

## ELIMINATE MOISTURE

While removing food sources is critical, don't forget to eliminate water sources as well. Have a plumber repair any leaky pipes or faucets throughout the home; just like sealing holes leading to the outdoors will simultaneously block bugs and reduce your heating costs, fixing leaks around the house likewise carries the added benefit of lowering your water costs.

You should also ensure that your gutters are draining properly and directing moisture away from the foundation, as improper draining is a common factor that attracts termites. If you don't feel comfortable fixing them yourself, don't hesitate to call a professional.

# HOW TO KEEP BUGS OUT FOR GOOD

Ultimately, if you want bugs out for good, you need to bring a professional on board.

While there are steps you can take to limit bug activity in and around your house, the average homeowner does not have access to the tools or knowledge necessary to completely pest-proof their home.

When you bring on a pest control professional to eliminate an insect infestation, they'll be able to quickly identify the source of the problem, kill all the bugs in your home, remove them safely and effectively, and apply a barrier around your home to keep them from ever coming back.

At Breda Pest Control, our team of licensed and certified pest control professionals have provided residents across the state of Georgia with safe and effective pest control for decades. No matter what pest is bugging you, we've got the tools and the know-how to keep it out of your house for good.

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