

SCORPION IMPORTATIONS

On rare occasions, scorpions unwittingly hitch a ride in boxes or baggage of travelers and appear in dense urban areas. Native scorpions that inhabit our foothills and canyon areas rarely venture into urban areas.

The Arizona bark scorpion, *Centruroides exilicauda*, is found in southeastern California, Arizona, Nevada, southern Utah, and southwestern New Mexico and is the only North American scorpion considered dangerous to humans. Importations of this species into urban Southern California have been documented but rarely have viable populations been established.

The San Gabriel Valley Mosquito & Vector Control District and the California Department of Public Health are investigating a small infestation in this area and wish to make you aware of the potential risks associated with this species as well as common precautions you should



DESCRIPTION

Scorpions are predators that feed on insects, spiders, centipedes, and small reptiles or vertebrates. Scorpions generally hunt at night and spend the day hiding in cool, damp locations.

Bark scorpions average 1 to 3 inches in length and have a very thin tail (1/16 inch wide); the body is yellow without stripes or patterns.

PREFERRED HABITAT

The bark scorpion is the only common climbing scorpion and does not normally burrow. It is often found above ground in rocky crevices, under tree bark, or in palm trees. Because it can climb block walls or stucco, this scorpion has been found living under the slats of shake roofs and in attics, and is the one most likely to enter dwellings. Indoors, they may be found in cracks and crevices of woodwork, behind baseboards, in closets and attics, and inside walls.

Bark Scorpions need only a 1/16th inch gap to enter buildings. Poorly sealed doors and windows, cracks in foundations, attic vents, and gaps around plumbing can provide entry.

MEDICAL SIGNIFICANCE

The venom of the bark scorpion may produce severe pain (but rarely swelling) at the site of the sting, numbness, frothing at the mouth, difficulty in breathing (including respiratory paralysis), muscle twitching, and convulsions. These symptoms signify the need for immediate medical attention. Especially at risk are children and the elderly. Death is rare as antivenin is available for severe cases. Certain people, however, may be allergic to the venom and can experience life-threatening side effects when stung.

MANAGEMENT OF SCORPIONS

Scorpions are difficult to control with insecticides alone. Habitat modification is important:

- Remove trash, logs, boards, stones, bricks, and other objects from around the building and
- Keep grass closely mowed near the home and minimize low growing ground cover
- Prune bushes and overhanging tree branches away from structures
- Store garbage containers above ground level
- Keep firewood outside until it is placed directly on the fire
- Ensure window screens are in good repair and make sure they fit tightly in the window frame
- Install weather-stripping around loose fitting doors and windows
- Plug weep holes in brick veneer with steel wool, pieces of nylon scouring pad or small squares of screen wire and caulk around roof eaves, pipes and any other cracks into the building

TIPS FOR PROFESSIONALS

Pesticides registered (as of October 2000) for scorpion control include: permethrin (Prelude[®], Dragnet[®]), cyfluthrin (Tempo[®]), cypermethrin (Demon[®]), lambda-cyhalothrin (Demand CS[®]), deltamethrin (Suspend[®]). Wettable powder formulations provide better residual control for crawling pests when applying perimeter sprays.

Apply pesticides around the foundation of the building and up to 1 foot above ground level on the exterior walls. Also apply pesticides around doors, window eaves and other potential points of entry. Follow directions carefully on the package for dosage, mixing and application methods. When using pyrethroids or other insecticides labeled for scorpion control, be sure to use the highest permissible label rate.



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