

Waiter, There is a Fly in My BBQ

During these warm summer days many people find it pleasant to eat out of doors. One of the common clichés in cartoons about picnics is lunch set on a blanket on the ground with a line of ants carrying the food to their nest.

According to the Ohio Pest Control Association that imagery makes for funny cartoons, but it doesn't represent a typical picnic. People usually don't eat off blankets; they eat off of picnic tables. Ants have some amount of difficulty getting to the food under those conditions. At picnics ants aren't usually a large problem, but flying insects are another story.

Flies are one of the worst carriers of disease, but when they land on a grilled chicken leg we just shoo it away and go on eating, because there doesn't appear to be any way to avoid them. They represent a fact of life when eating outside the home beyond the protection of screen doors and window screens.

Yellow jackets also love barbecues. Everything they need is there. Adult wasps (which is what yellow jackets are) feed on nectar and sweet foods. The nectar in flowers, rotting fruit on the ground, BBQ sauce, and soda in cans are all wasp-attractants. They feed the larva (their young) protein. Most of the time that protein comes in the form of other insects larva, but they will swoop down and chew off tiny pieces of chicken leg, pork chop, or steak without any hesitation. They may fly down into soda cans and get trapped, at least until someone takes a swig of that sweet cool refreshment and all of a sudden has a wasp in his or her mouth. What follows is usually unpleasant and may even require a trip to the hospital for those allergic to wasp venom.

There are a number of common sense approaches to this problem. In preparation for patio dining or picnicking people may want to invest in fly and wasp traps. These are usually colorful jars with small amounts of attractant substances that will lure insects into the jars. Unable to escape they will eventually die.

Remember, these are attractant devices. Don't place them close to the cooking and eating area. The idea is to attract wasps and flies away from where people are cooking and eating. This and keeping garbage away from the dining area makes a big difference. Keep food covered as much as possible, and be wary of taking a big swig of soda without looking into the can. Better yet, use a glass.

The safest and most effective solution to a serious pest problem is the services of an experienced, licensed pest management professional. To locate a qualified pest control operator in your area contact the Ohio Pest Control Association at 937-222-1024, visit the OPCA web site at www.ohiopca.com, or send e-mail to info@ohiopca.com

The Ohio Pest Control Association is the only trade association dedicated solely to the pest control industry in the state of Ohio. With approximately 200 member companies in communities throughout the state, OPCA is The Voice of the Pest Control Industry in Ohio.