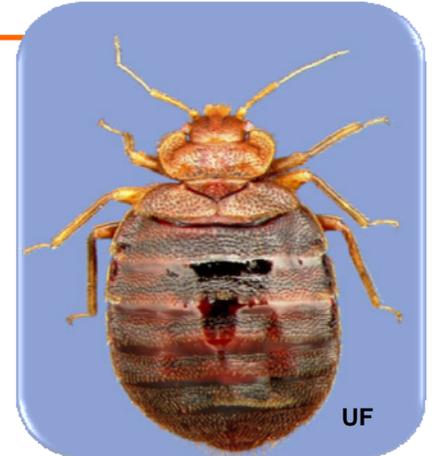


# Bed Bug Prevention and Control Techniques

by Erin Harlow

## What Do You Do if You Think You Have Bed Bugs?

- If you find insects and you aren't sure if they are bed bugs, bring them to your local Extension Office for a positive identification.
- Don't throw away all of your furniture and household items. Treatments can be done to help save most of your items and anything new that is brought in the house will become infested.
- Don't begin sleeping in another room or on the sofa because they will follow you.
- To determine if you have bed bugs, begin by doing an inspection around the bed and look for spots and smears (see photo).
- Look for bed bugs in tight corners and crevices in and around the bed.
- Follow the control and prevention techniques listed.
- Over-the-counter bug bombs and many pesticides are ineffective at controlling bed bugs. Always follow the label on products you may use. Bed bugs are best controlled through many techniques. Using the dryer and being diligent about inspections will help reduce populations. Most bed bug infestations require the help of a professional.



Female adult bed bug



Blood smears



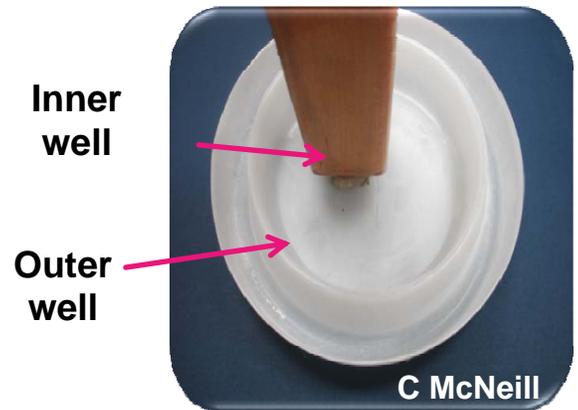
Bed bug hiding between seat cushions

## Why are They such a Problem?

- Bed bugs are a nuisance.
- They can cause people to have sleepless nights.
- They can cause inflamed, itchy skin lesions.
- They stain sheets and mattresses.
- They cause psychological stress, such as delusory parasitosis. Delusory parasitosis is a condition when people believe they have bugs crawling on them or biting them and they think that no one else believes they exist except themselves.

## Control and Prevention Techniques

- Place items such as pillows, linens, and shoes in the dryer on high heat for an hour.
- All life stages of bed bugs are killed at 120° F.
- Use a vacuum to clean-up any bed bugs you see, however vacuums cannot remove eggs. Tape the vacuum bag shut when you are done and throw it away outside of the house or place it in the freezer for at least five days to reuse.
- Bed bugs cannot crawl-up slick surfaces such as plastic and glass. Use bins with lids to prevent bed bugs from being transferred on things such as purses and book bags.
- Pull the bed away from the wall or get it off the floor and place monitoring devices underneath the bed posts (see photo). Devices such as (climb-ups) have talc powder in the rings. Bed bugs can crawl down or in and then cannot escape. Bed bugs will remain alive until they are killed. Use a small amount of rubbing alcohol to kill them.
- Cover beds with bed bug protective mattress covers. These are specifically designed for bed bug control, so make sure you purchase the right one. You will need one for the mattress and box springs. They are made of cloth, not plastic and can be purchased at most mattress retail stores. They must be left on the bed for up to a year.
- Do not pick-up furniture from the side of the road and always check secondhand items for bed bugs before bringing them into your house.



Bed foot inside climb up

## Hiring a Professional

- To treat most bed bug infestations the help of a professional is needed.
- Professionals should be licensed in the category of General Household Pest Control by the State of Florida.
- Treatment options may vary, but companies who successfully control bed bugs generally use several techniques which may include heat, traditional pesticide applications, and monitoring.
- The professional will likely ask you to follow some directions including reducing clutter and drying clothes, linens, etc. Following their directions greatly increases your chances of a successful treatment.

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For more information on bed bug management options, visit the University of Florida's Bed Bug Pest Management website at [http://ipm.ifas.ufl.edu/community/structural/bed\\_bug\\_IPM.shtml](http://ipm.ifas.ufl.edu/community/structural/bed_bug_IPM.shtml) or the Jacksonville Bed Bug Task Force's website at [http://duval.ifas.ufl.edu/Bed\\_Bugs.shtml](http://duval.ifas.ufl.edu/Bed_Bugs.shtml).

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This fact sheet is jointly sponsored by the Florida Cooperative Extension Service, IFAS, Nick Place, Dean; City of Jacksonville, Alvin Brown, Mayor; and the Duval County Cooperative Extension Service, Mike Sweat, Director.