

Healthy Colorado Schools

FEBRUARY TIP OF THE MONTH: BAT BUGS and SWALLOW BUGS



Before bed bug populations exploded, bat bugs and swallow bugs were more commonly found in Colorado homes. They bite humans, but don't set up housekeeping like bedbugs. Nonetheless, they are troublesome.

Bat bugs develop in bat colonies. When the colony leaves its roosting site, bat bugs may wander indoors in search of food and bite humans. However, they don't survive long because they must feed on bats.

Swallow bugs develop in cliff and barn swallow colonies. They, too, can move indoors and bite humans when birds leave their roost. They are most bothersome in late winter and early spring when they emerge from dormancy and search for a meal.

When biting insects are found in homes and schools, have them correctly identified.

Bat bugs and swallow bugs look similar to bed bugs and are easily mistaken for them. When either swallow bugs or bat bugs are identified, take these steps to manage them:

- ◆ Locate the roosting site of bats and swallows. Check attics and building exteriors for signs of infestations.
- ◆ Remove and/or exclude bats. A professional can assist you with this.
- ◆ Swallows are protected by Federal law. Nests can be destroyed prior to spring egg laying or after they are abandoned in summer.
- ◆ Screen areas where swallows previously nested to prevent re-nesting in those areas. Do this before they return in spring.
- ◆ Seal cracks and crevices the bugs use to enter homes.
- ◆ Insecticides may be applied to cracks and crevices where bugs enter homes.

Keep Colorado schools pest free