

FLEAS

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FLEAS

The Flea

And here's the happy bounding flea-

You cannot tell the he from she.

The sexes look alike you see:

But she can tell and so can he.

- Roland Young

Fleas, those varmints that are so pesky at certain times of year, have been nasty critters in the past, but now there are natural and not so natural; but effective and fairly safe ways of ridding them from your pets and household.

Fleas need to live on cats, dogs and people if there is a short supply of pets. A blood meal is necessary for the females to lay fertile eggs and to commence a new wave of fleas into the world. This can take only two to three weeks during the ideal times of year. Eggs laid close to organic material (bits of flaked skin, hair, any organic material) is all that is needed to keep the flea cycle going. The presence of fleas is not at all a reflection of the cleanliness of the house, it just means that they have decided to take up residence in a place where other animals have lived (including humans).

Fleas like to live on the pet's belly and rear (top and bottom) and can cause all sorts of problems like: itching, aggravated existing allergies, hot spots, and tapeworms. Severe flea infestation can cause anemia and weakness in times of stress. Fleas flock to the weaker animals as the incapacitated immune system allows for easy entry (the shields are down), these individuals are the best indicator of the beginnings of possible flea infestation.

The best flea control is a vital animal; radiating health and fitness, consuming fresh wholesome food living in natural balance. The presence of fleas is an indication further refinement is necessary in creating greater life energy.

Some of the natural flea controls include the use of herbal repellents on the animals, diatomaceous earth, borax and flea traps consisting of a suspended light bulb two feet above a cookie sheet filled with water and dishwashing soap. The scenario is that the flea jumps to the warm light (thinking it's a dog or cat) falls into the water and soap mixture and drowns. These traps will only kill adult fleas and can indicate which areas of the house contain the most hungry adult fleas.

Recently there has been the introduction of many new flea products that reflect a refinement in the chemical destruction of fleas and at the same time making it less toxic for the pets and humans living in the same environment.

Growth hormone inhibitors and regulators act only on developing insects and prevent the flea egg from hatching out. These products make the fleas sterile but do not kill the adult fleas and must be in place before the eggs are hatched. These products can be given internally to the pets, sprayed in the environment, or placed directly on the pet (examples are Program and Precor products). Many times these products are combined with other chemicals that kill the adult flea.

Fipronil is the active ingredient in a new flea spray and it seems to be doing the trick for now. It kills fleas for up to 5 weeks (the claim is 8 weeks) and ticks (up to four weeks)with a single application to the skin (Frontline). If given with one of the growth hormone inhibitors or regulators fleas could be a thing of the past even in the not so vital animal.

However one wishes to rid themselves of fleas, not getting them in the first place is the best way to stay ahead of the game. Sound management along with top quality nutrition, exercise and love will go the longest way in insuring quality living for you and your loved ones.

The Fly and a Flea in a Flue

A fly and a flea in a flue

Were imprisoned, so what could they do?

Said the fly, "Let us flee!"

"Let us fly!" said the flea.

And they flew through a flaw in the flue.