

Title: Letter to the Editor on Bed Bugs

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The Northwest Center for Alternatives to Pesticides (NCAP) works with and trains the low-income housing community concerning bed bugs and helps develop preventative measures and policies. We also work with concerned homeowners seeking alternatives to insecticides. Reacting to bed bugs with patience, caution and prevention is excellent advice (Diane Dietz, The Register-Guard, June 26, 2011). Heat, monitors, reducing clutter, and using mattress covers designed to contain bed bugs are some effective alternatives to controlling or preventing bed bugs. Bed bugs can easily hitch a ride when traveling. To avoid bringing these unwanted house guests home ask the airline for plastic bags and bag your carry-on items before placing in the overhead bin. In your hotel place suitcases in the bathtub when not in use and inspect your mattress and head board (seams, zipper, drill holes) for signs of bed bugs including actual bed bugs (dead or alive), small dark stains on linens or around mattress seams, and larvae or skin casings. After traveling, unpack directly into a washing machine and inspect your luggage carefully. If you discover bed bugs don't panic. Bed bugs are not shown to transmit disease. Likewise, don't turn immediately to insecticides, which are often ineffective. For one, many bed bugs have become resistant to the chemicals used to combat them. The misuse of pesticides can cause much more harm, especially to children and pets, than the bed bugs themselves. For more information to outfox the bed bugs, please see our website at www.pesticide.org (Search "bed bugs").

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