



Courthouse, 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor  
100 E. Tyler St.  
Athens, TX 75751  
Phone: (903)675-6130  
Fax: (903)677-7222  
<http://henderson.agrilife.org/>

---

**October 23, 2015**

## **AGRIVIEW**

**By: Rick Hirsch  
County Extension Agent**

**November is ushering the colder, wetter days that precede the onset of winter. Many homeowners with fireplaces have already enjoyed the first fire of the season, thanks to an early cold snap last week. Many of you are probably using wood left over from last year. After bringing the first load of wood to the house, often we discover the wood is infested with bugs. Warming: don't reach for the bug spray!**

**Never spray the woodpile. The chemical can remain on the surface of the wood and can produce a toxic vapor when burned, which could be irritating to the eyes and sinuses. While not serious, common sense tells us not to burn something that is toxic. Wood that has been treated with preservatives or other chemicals should also not be burned in the fireplace.**

**Beetles are the most frequently found type of insect emerging from firewood. Fortunately, these beetles are unlikely at attack seasoned or finished woods in your home. They normally infest green wood in newly felled or weakened trees and aren't interested in your bookcase or antique table.**

**Beetles lay their eggs in trees and often end up in firewood. If you bring infested wood into the house and let it sit, adult beetles eventually emerge. Finding these insects in the house alarms some folks.**

Termites, carpenter ants, cockroaches, spiders and centipedes, also can enter the house on firewood and cause undue concern.

The most serious pest that is often brought into your home with firewood is the brown recluse spider. The brown recluse spider is a nonaggressive spider that may never move from the log while it is being transported from the storage shed to the house. This spider normally bites when it is injured or trapped in clothing. The venom from its bite can be extremely harmful to humans.

These tips should be followed to prevent importing insects, spiders and other unwanted critters into your home with the firewood.

Never spray the woodpile with insecticide. The vapors could be toxic. Never store wood in direct contact with the soil. Instead, stack wood off the ground on a rack or platform of treated wood or stone. Keep the woodpile dry with air circulation under and around it. This discourages cockroaches, millipedes, centipedes and pillbugs from setting up housekeeping. Never store firewood too close to the home. Termites or ants that find a way into the woodpile can use it to gain entry into the house. Never store wood in the house. Bring in only as much wood as you can burn at one time. Dangerous insects and spiders are rare, but it's a good idea to check logs carefully for insects before carrying them inside. Wear long sleeves and gloves when handling firewood.

If you do find termites in your firewood, don't panic. Just don't bring the wood into the house until you are ready to burn it. Termites can't survive the fire.

**IMPORTANT DATES:**

**October 31<sup>st</sup> - Hunter Education Class - 7:30 a.m. - Texas Freshwater Fisheries Center, Athens - 903-676-2277 for more information and to register**

*Rick Hirsch is the Henderson County Extension Agent - Agriculture for the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service. Visit our web page at <http://henderson.agrilife.org/>.*