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Many species of insects and vermin are native to the neighborhoods of California. During extreme shifts in weather patterns (i.e. winter rain and summer droughts), many pests find shelter in the hidden or neglected areas of a home. You can prevent a majority of invasions by doing frequent maintenance checks and adopting precautionary habits.

One common denominator contributing to the presence of many insects and rodents is easy access to food. In order to avoid attracting flies, cockroaches, ants, bees and rodents:

* keep pet food off the ground in raised dishes;
* store leftovers in tightly sealed containers or plastic bags;
* keep ripening fruits and vegetables off the counter and in the refrigerator;
* clean out trash cans with a water hose frequently;
* make sure all food stored in the pantry is sealed, and thrown out once it expires; and
* place a cinnamon stick or bay leaf in containers with rice or grain (the scent deters beetles and moths).

Small pests find their way into homes through wall and floor cracks, utility openings and under doors. Keep them out by:

* installing door sweeps or thresholds at the base of every doorway;
* sealing utility openings where wires and pipes enter the home from outside;
* using silicone or acrylic latex caulk to repair cracks around doors and windows; and
* installing wire mesh or hardware cloth over the attic, roof, and any crawl space vents.

Pay special attention to:

* corners of the garage;
* closets;
* behind large appliances; and
* under beds.

You might also consider planting native flowers and shrubs to distract pests. Large trees can also encourage birds and bats to prey on insects around the exterior of the home.