Fire Ants

Characteristics

- Worker ants are about 1/8 inch long.
- Females sting, and are reddish brown.
- Males are dark brown.

Habitat

- Mounds are above ground with loose soil, resembling gopher diggings.
- Mounds are generally numerous and conspicuous, but may not be obvious in dry weather.
- Mounds are often found along driveways, walkways, patios, and at the base of fence posts and trees.

Stings

- A burning sensation occurs immediately.
- A fluid filled pustule develops within a day or two and may persist for several days or more.
- Numerous stings usually occur.
- Secondary infection is common.
- Allergic reactions to stings are possible.

Western Diamondback Rattlesnake

Characteristics

- Body length is commonly 3 to 4 feet long, but may be longer.
- A series of diamond-shaped blotches runs down the length of its back, with a light border surrounding each blotch.
- The background coloration may be tan, brown, or gray.
- A series of rattles is found at the tip of the tail.
- These snakes are nocturnal.

Habitat

- These snakes inhabit dry, rocky, shrub-covered terrain where they can conceal themselves inside crevices in the rocks or in mouse holes.

Bites

- When disturbed it usually stands its ground, lifts its head well above its coils, and sounds a buzzing warning.
- If you hear a rattlesnake shaking its rattle, it's issuing a warning, and if the warning is ignored it may bite.
- The pain from the bite is immediate and severe.
- The bite may be accompanied by swelling, weakness, sweating, chills, faintness, dizziness, elevated or depressed pulse, nausea, or vomiting.

Copperhead

Characteristics

- Body length is commonly about 2 feet long.
- A series of reddish-brown hourglass shaped markings run down the length of its back.
- The background coloration is pale tan to reddish-brown.
- These snakes are nocturnal in hot weather.

Habitat

- These snakes inhabit partly shaded areas, such as leaf piles beneath trees, or alongside logs and stones in wooded forests.

Bites

- These snakes are responsible for most poisonous snakebites, but their venom is only mildly toxic.
- Symptoms of the snake's bite are similar to that of the rattlesnake but less severe.

Medically Important Animals and Insects of the Fort Hood Area

Preventive Medicine
Darnall Army
Community Hospital
Fort Hood, Texas

To avoids bites and stings:

- Learn to recognize venomous animals in your area.
- Wear protective clothing.
- Do not handle venomous or unfamiliar animals.

Brown Recluse Spider

Characteristics

•Adult spiders are grayish to dark brown with a leg span about the size of a quarter.
•A violin-shaped, dark marking with the neck of the violin pointing towards the bulbous abdomen appears on the back near the head region.
•Both the male and female spiders are similar in appearance and equally toxic.
•The immature stages closely resemble the adults except for size and a slightly lighter color.
•These spiders are nocturnal.

Habitat

•These spiders prefer undisturbed areas such as, under furniture, behind baseboards, under carpet, in clothing or shoes, or under piles of wood, and often hide in cracks and crevices.

Bites

•Although bites are serious, there is little pain at the time of the bite.
•A red ring develops around the bite area.
•The skin begins to slough off; creating an open wound that can take months to heal.

Black Widow Spider

Characteristics

•Female spiders are larger and more venomous than male spiders.
•Female's abdomen is shiny, usually jet-black, rounded, and globular, often with a red hourglass mark on the underside.
•Female spiders frequently hang upside down in the web (making the red hourglass visible).
•The leg span of the female spider is about the size of a quarter.

Habitat

•These spiders prefer dark or shaded areas such as, under furniture, in latrines, in hollow logs, in shoes, or, outside under rocks and in debris piles.

Bites

•There is little pain at the time of the bite.
•Slight redness and swelling and two faint puncture marks may appear at the bite.
•Pain becomes intense in one to three hours and may continue up to 48 hours.
•Pain usually progresses from the bite up or down the limb, finally localizing in the abdomen and back.
•The abdominal muscles may become rigid and board-like with severe cramps

Honeybee

Characteristics

•The bees are about one-half inch long.
•The abdomen has alternating bands of yellow and black/brown.
•Small hairs cover much of the bee's body.
•The highly aggressive Africanized honeybees (killer bees) are indistinguishable from common honeybees.

Habitat

• The wax hive is constructed by the bees and often hangs from the branch of a tree.
•Colonies of bees sometimes swarm to new locations.

Stings

•A sting is quite painful and felt immediately.
•The stinger and its poison sac are left embedded within the skin subsequent to a sting.
•A scraping motion with a fingernail, knife, credit card, or similar object should remove the singer.
•Individuals that are known to have an allergy to bee stings should carry a bee sting kit.
•Serious allergies to bee stings could result in anaphylactic shock.

Scorpion

Characteristics

•Scorpions have eight legs and two lobster-like claws.
•The body length averages between two and three inches long.
•The abdominal tail is segmented, can curve upward, and terminates in a venomous stinger.
•Females may carry young on their back.
•Scorpions are nocturnal.

Habitat

•Scorpions prefer dark, moist, undisturbed areas, such as woodpiles, cracks and crevices, and under rocks.

Stings

•A sting is quite painful and felt immediately.
•Swelling and discoloration at the sting may persist for several days.