Montgomery Advertiser

MY LIFE

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SECTION C

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Due to space constraints, 'Hints from Heloise' does not appear today

Some defenses for flea season are painful to pets, owners

NICK THOMAS

Last year was a very active flea season across the South. The tiny bouncing blood-suckers were particularly prolific due to a warm, moist spring. And even if your pets mostly remained inside, fleas probably still managed to hitch a ride and set up residence in your carpet and furniture.

So how should an itchy, battle-weary homeowner prepare for combat this flea season?

According to Dr. Susan Graydon, a veterinarian at the Eastmont Animal Clinic for over 35 years, prevention is the best approach to thwart a flea invasion. This includes the use of flea collars, pills or monthly medicines applied to the skin.

"Although it's worse in spring and summer, flea season in Alabama is really from January to December!" Graydon said. "We just don't have long, cold winters in the South to break the flea lifecycle. So pets should be treated all year long."

Despite dutifully medicating our cat with a monthly topical product in recent years, treatment seemed completely ineffective last year. This doesn't surprise Graydon.

"Studies have shown that in some cities there are neighborhoods where topical products are no longer effective because fleas have become resistant," she explained. "But new products are coming out all the time to address that. The best are combination products that also prevent heartworm in dogs and cats, such as Advance Multi."

In extreme cases of infestation, additional chemical treatment of the house or pet may be necessary.

One product we found effective was Enforcer Flea Spray, available in most stores. After a population of fleas established their own country in our living room last spring, the Enforcer wiped them out almost immediately. I have no problem with insect genocide.

Last year, we also resorted to another line of defense: bathing.

While this generally presents few problems for dogs, it's an entirely different matter for cats. We used Adams Flea & Tick Shampoo for Cats (also from a local big-box store), and it worked well.

Unfortunately it has one disadvantage: You have to shampoo the cat.

Flea issues aside, many people incorrectly believe cats are like self-cleaning ovens and never need a good scrub down. However, occasional cat bathing is a good idea, especially during flea season.

But beware. Cats do have a habit of transforming into murderous, biting-scratching demons when they hit the water. Here's how a typical attempt at cat bathing may unfold:

Step 1: Find cat. This may be challenging, especially if the cat suspects a bath is imminent. Cats can be particularly resourceful when it comes to stealth tactics designed to avoid baths, so check behind the sofa, in the clothes dryer, up the chimney, in your neigh-

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bor's sock drawer, Mars.

Step 2: Place cat in sink. At this point, suddenly realizing you've forgotten the shampoo bottle, fetch it and return.

Step 3: Find cat and place in sink, again.

Step 4: Place cotton balls in cat's ears. This is not to prevent water getting in, but to avoid further frightening the cat from your screams.

Step 5: Pour shampoo in lukewarm water over cat.

Step 6: Remove cat from head, and return to sink. Reach for towel to wipe soap and blood from eyes and face (yours).

Step 7: Find cat, again.

Step 8: Return soapy, wet, howling, scratching cat to sink. Lather, rinse, towel dry and release.

Step 9: Call 911 and request blood transfusion. While waiting for ambulance, disinfect any area where excrement may have been deposited; also check if the cat left any.

Finally, having (barely) survived the cat washing ordeal, we also added this home remedy to last year's anti-flea arsenal:

Place a candle in a large dish containing a quarter inch of water with a squirt of detergent. Lay the pan on the floor in the infected room and light the candle just before lights out. The fleas, at least some of them, will be attracted to the heat, fall into the soapy water, and drown. Repeat for several nights. It works. Really.

Admittedly, this is not a typical "vet approved" method of flea removal. Nevertheless, awaking to find a dozen bug corpses floating in this lethal trap is a small, yet gratifying victory in the unrelenting flea war.

But please note: neither the author nor this publication accepts any responsibility should someone in your house trip over the candle and set the sofa on fire, whilst fleeing from a recently bathed, vindictive cat.

Thomas' features and columns have appeared in more than 300 magazines and newspapers, including the Washington Post, Chicago Tribune, Boston Globe, and San Francisco Chronicle. He can be reached at his blog: http://getnickt.blogspot.com

CABLE	DISN	Blog	Little Manhattan ('05) Josh Hutcherson. First love.		Good Luck	Austin (HD)	Shake It (HD)	Jessie (HD)	Wizards (HD)	Wizards (HD)
	E!	E! News (HD)	Kourtney & Kim Surrogacy.	Kourtney & Kim (HD)		After Lately (N)	C. Lately (N)	E! News (HD)		C. Lately (HD)
	ESPN	(6:00) MLB Baseball: Philadelphia Phillies at Cincinnati Reds (HD)			Baseball Tonight (HD)		SportsCenter (HD)		SportsCenter (HD)	
	ESPN2	2013 WNBA Draft (HD)	NBA Coast to Coast (HD)				Special (HD)	Special (HD)	Baseball Tonight (HD)	
	ESPNC	Battle of The Network Stars	A.W.A. Wrestling		A.W.A. Wrestling		PBA Bowling (Replay) (HD)		Up Close	Firestone
	FAM	Secret Life of Teenager (N) (HD)		Legally Blonde ('01, Comedy) ★★½ Reese Witherspoon. (HD)			The 700 Club (N)		Bel-Air	Bel-Air
	FOOD	Diners (HD)	Diners (HD)	Diners (HD)	Diners (HD)	Diners (HD)	Diners (HD)	Diners (HD)	Diners (HD)	Diners (HD)
	FOXSS	UFC Reloaded "UFC 143: Diaz vs Condit" (Taped) (HD)				World Poker Tour (HD)	World Poker Tour (HD)		NHL Hockey (Replay) (HD)	
	FXN	The O'Reilly Factor (N) (HD)		Hannity (HD)		On the Record with Greta (N)	The O'Reilly Factor (HD)		Hannity (HD)	
	FX	The A-Team ('10, Adventure) ★★★ Liam Neeson. Soldiers are wrongly accused of a crime. (HD)						Tropic Thunder ('08) ★★★ Robert Downey Jr.		
	GOLF	Haney "An Island Retreat"		Haney "Prepping for Phoenix"		Feherty "Nick Faldo" (HD)	Golf Central (HD)		Haney "Prepping for Phoenix"	
	HALL	Frasier	Frasier	Frasier	Frasier	Frasier	Frasier	Frasier	Gold Girl	Gold Girl
	HGTV	Love It or List It (HD)		Love It or List It (N) (HD)		Hunters (N)	Hunters (HD)	Love It or List It (HD)		Love It or List It (HD)
	HIST	American Pickers (HD)		American Pickers (HD)		Counting (HD)	Counting (HD)	(:02) American Pickers (HD)		(:01) American Pickers (HD)
	LIFE	The Client List (HD)		Dirty Teacher ('13, Drama) Josie Davis. Boyfriend seduced. (HD)				(:01) The Client List (HD)		(:02) The Client List (HD)
	MSNBC	All in with Chris Hayes (HD)		The Rachel Maddow Show (N)		Lawrence O'Donnell (HD)		All in with Chris Hayes (HD)		The Rachel Maddow Show (HD)
	MTV	2013 MTV Movie Awards Comedic actress Rebel Wilson hosts.				Teen Mom 2 (N) (HD)		World of Jenks New success. (N)		Teen Mom 2 Celebrations. (HD)
	NGC	The 80s: The Decade (HD)		The 80s: The Decade (N) (HD)		The 80s: The Decade (N) (HD)		The 80s: The Decade (HD)		The 80s: The Decade (HD)
	NICK	Full Hse	Full Hse	Full Hse	Full Hse	Nanny	Nanny	Friends	(:33) Friends	(:06) Friends (:39) Friends
	OWN	Iyanla Fix My Life (HD)		Iyanla Fix My Life (HD)		Life with La Toya (HD)		Iyanla Fix My Life (HD)		Iyanla Fix My Life (HD)
	SOAP	Days of Our Lives		General Hospital Life of intrigue.		Young and the Restless (HD)		Days of Our Lives		General Hospital Life of intrigue.
	SPIKE	Gone in 60 Seconds ('00, Action) ★★½ Nicolas Cage. A 50-car contract. (HD)					(:45) Gone in 60 Seconds ('00, Action) ★★½ Nicolas Cage. A 50-car contract. (HD)			
	SPTSO	(6:00) College Baseball: Mississippi State vs Texas A&M (HD)				College Flash Classics		College "1993 LSU vs Alabama"		Fight Sports "Boxing" (HD)
	SPEED	Pinks - All Out "Sonoma" (HD)		R U Faster	R U Faster	Dumbest (HD)	Dumbest (HD)	Pinks - All Out "Sonoma" (HD)		R U Faster	R U Faster
	SUND	(5:45) Jerry Maguire ('96) (HD)		Top of the Lake (N) (HD)		Top of the Lake (N) (HD)		Breaking Bad "Peekaboo" (HD)		Breaking Bad (HD)
	SYFY	(4:00) The Two Towers ('02)		Defiance "Pilot" Soldier returns to changed St. Louis. (N)				Defiance "Pilot" Soldier returns to changed St. Louis.		
	TBS	Family	Family	Family	Family	Family	Family	Conan Bengt Washburn. (N) (HD)	Office (HD)	Conan (HD)
	TCM	Winchester '73 ('50, Western) James Stewart.			(:45) Colt .45 ('50, Western) ★★½ Randolph Scott.			Springfield Rifle ('52, Western) Gary Cooper. Outlaws infiltrated.		
	TECH	American Ninja Warrior (HD)		American Ninja Warrior (HD)		American Ninja Warrior "Finals" Finalists attempt stage four. (HD)			Campus P.D	Knight
	TLC	Extreme (HD)	Extreme (HD)	Extreme (HD)	Extreme (HD)	Tattoos (HD)	Tattoos (HD)	Extreme (HD)	Extreme (HD)	Tattoos (HD)	Tattoos (HD)
	TNT	Castle "Heartbreak Hotel" (HD)		Dallas J.R.'s plan. (N) (HD)		Dallas "Legacies" (N) (HD)		Dallas J.R.'s plan. (HD)		Dallas "Legacies" (HD)
	TOON	(:15) Regular	(:45) Orange	King	King	American (HD)	American (HD)	Family	Family	(:15) Robot Squid (HD)
	TRAV	Bizarre Foods "Las Vegas"		Bizarre Foods America (N)		Burger Land (N)	Burger	Bizarre Foods "Venice"		Bizarre "Northern California"
	TRUTV	Lizard Lic	Lizard Lic	Lizard Lic	Lizard Lic	Lizard Lic (N)	Lizard Lic	All Worked Up	All Worked Up	Lizard Lic	Lizard Lic
	TVLAND	Gold Girl	Gold Girl	Raymond (HD)	Raymond (HD)	Raymond (HD)	Raymond (HD)	Queens (HD)	Queens (HD)	Queens (HD)	Queens (HD)
	USA	WWE Monday Night Raw (HD)						(:05) NCIS: Los Angeles (HD)		(:05) CSI: Crime Scene (HD)
	VH1	Love & Hip Hop (N) (HD)		The Gossip Game (N) (HD)		TI and Tiny (N)	Love & Hip Hop (HD)		TI & Tiny (HD)	Master of The Mix (N) (HD)
	WE	Roseanne	Roseanne	Roseanne	Roseanne	Roseanne	Roseanne	Roseanne	Roseanne	Roseanne	Roseanne
	WGN	Funniest Home Videos (HD)		Funniest Home Videos (HD)		WGN News at Nine (HD)		The Vampire Diaries (HD)		Rules (HD)	Rules (HD)
PREMIUM	CINE	(:15) Cleanskin ('12, Crime) ★★½ Sean Bean. A terrorist cell. (HD)				X-Men: First Class ('11, Action) ★★★ James McAvoy. (HD)			(:15) Hypnotika ('13) ½ (HD)	
	CINE2	(6:10) Contraband ('12) ★★½ (HD)		Rushmore ('98, Comedy) ★★★½ Bill Murray. (HD)		(:35) Traveler		(:10) Traveler "Sax on the Beach"		Paul ('11) (HD)
	ENCORE	The Dead Pool ('88, Drama) ★★ Clint Eastwood.			(:35) Red Dawn ('84, Action) Patrick Swayze. Kids fight invaders.			Cursed ('05, Horror) ★½ Christina Ricci.		
	HBO	Real Time with Bill Maher (HD)		Rock Of Ages ('12, Comedy) ★★ Diego Boneta. Chasing fame.				(:05) Game of Thrones (HD)	World Champ. Boxing (HD)	
	HBO2	The Rite (HD)	Veep (HD)	Game of Thrones (HD)		Louis C.K.: Oh My God (HD)		Project X ('12, Comedy) ★★½ Thomas Mann.		I, Robot (HD)
	HBO3	The Sopranos (HD)		Red Tails ('12, Action) ★★ Terrence Howard. Black pilots. (HD)				(:15) Saving Private Ryan ('98, Drama) ★★★★ Tom Hanks. (HD)		
	SHOW	(6:20) Real Steel ('11) ★★★ Hugh Jackman. (HD)			Nurse J. (HD)	The Borgias (HD)		Inside Com (N)	Nurse J. (HD)	The Borgias (HD)
	SHOW2	Hick ('12, Drama) Chloë Grace Moretz. Escape to Las Vegas. (HD)				The Big C	The Big C	Ian Bagg: Getting to (HD)		Suicide Girls: UK Holiday
	STARZ	Spartacus: Damned "Victory"		Da Vinci's "The Hanged Man"		Kill Bill: Vol. 2 ('04, Action) ★★★½ Uma Thurman. Trail of revenge.			Spartacus: Damned "Victory"	
	TMC	Across the Line ('10, Crime) ★★ Aidan Quinn. (HD)			Casino Jack ('10, Crime) Kevin Spacey. Washington lobbyist. (HD)			The Big Empty ('03, Drama) Jon Favreau. (HD)		