

DIG THIS by Peg Tillery (for 11-07-07) The Flicker Saga Continues © 20070

Here's another flicker installment. Readers who have been following the story for several years will remember that we have a resident flicker and his mate living on the north side of our home. It all started about eight or so years ago.

Mr. Flicker has perched on our house nearly year round. He originally began his takeover of our home by using the downspouts and chimney flashing to drum away making sweet music to attract his mate who, in response to his musical enchantments, screeched back in amorous reply. He of course would then answer squawkingly back at her.

My husband, through the years has plastered mesh wire hardware cloth across the whole side of our house under the overhangs. This unfortunately has served as a good purchase for our two flickers to cling even more adeptly to the side of our home. But at least it keeps them from making huge holes in our siding.

We next put up a flicker nesting box thinking that would suffice instead of having Mr. Flicker trying to tunnel into our attic. Longtime readers will remember that our nesting box was overtaken by starlings but not before Mr. and Mrs. Flicker had laid one egg. It was quite interesting watching the starlings feed the baby bird who was quite a bit bigger than their own birdlets. Needless to say when the birdlets fledged, we immediately removed the flicker house.

Then a few years later, because we have restrictive view covenants in our neighborhood, we removed several diseased topped trees from that side of our property. (Note – we did not top these trees – we inherited them.) We thought when the whole north side of our house became more exposed that the flicker family would depart for woodsier nesting spots. Alas, that was not to be. We think our house became even more attractive to the flicker at that point. Maybe it looked like the one remaining tree to them.

The flicker not only began nesting in more earnest by latching onto the north side of our house but also began exploring all the options available to him on the east, west and even south side of our house. Our dark brown home must have appealed to him. We've even thought about changing the color to dissuade him.

Finally, a while ago we happened upon a product called the "Attack Spider." This product worked pretty well, but we're now up to about seven "Attack Spiders" placed along the eaves and peaks of our house where Mr. Flicker likes to hammer away the most. They worked for a while, but now that the weather is turning cooler, he's back in serious and sustained attempts on the north side of our house (on the other side of our bedroom wall). We put up more attack spiders, but he's learned (quickly we might add) to tap and rap very very softly so the spiders don't drop down from the eaves to scare him away.

The moral of this story is we've given up for now. We think we're just glad that this beautiful and pestiferous bird and his long staying wife are finding warmth from the weather by hanging onto the side of our house. Luckily, so far, they must have a tree somewhere where they rear

their young because we get a slight respite each summer. And, we're very glad these baby flickers aren't joining their parents on the side of our home.