



#Infested

#GotchA!

**The Do's and Don'ts of Great Deals –
Estate Sales, Flea Markets, Antique**

Malls, Secondhand Buys and Bed Bugs

I've been flea market and dumpster diving since I flipped my first house many years ago. Sometimes, I would find that perfect piece that someone threw out which with a little elbow-grease, turned out to be a fabulous find. Like a beautifully hand carved mantel that was pulled from a teardown and thrown in a dumpster. I couldn't believe it when I found it. The wood was solid cherry and all it needed was a detailed sanding, and a stain facelift to create a spectacular piece of eye candy for my fireplace.

My favorites are estate sales. I once found a beautifully designed couch with big rolled arms. When I pulled the sofa cover back, I noticed the wood framed structure and cushions were still in great shape, the legs needed sanding and stain, but I envisioned the old worn and torn upholstery replaced with an embossed design and piping, so I bought it for fifty dollars. After measuring I knew I had to buy around seven and a half yards of material, new batting, rope for piping and thread; I added it up and saw for fewer than four hundred and fifty dollars and some attention to detail, I could have a brand new couch for my room. Although it presented its challenge, my Aunt and I transformed in a matter of days, what would have cost well over a thousand dollars to have someone else do the work.

Buying mistakes – is it REALLY a deal?

You decide to decorate the guest room in your home with an old-fashioned vintage look. Knowing the price of a couple thousand dollars for refurbished antiques through a dealer, you decide to pursue furniture that may be blemished and in need of repair. You see a picture on Craigslist from a young couple who is selling

their recent deceased grandmother's (*junk furniture*) as they put it and to make an offer, everything must go.

You find this valuable antique bed frame, side table and dresser with very little wear and tear and buy it for a *killer price* of two hundred dollars. (They even gave you the mattress and boxspring FREE!) On the way out you notice an Antique Mahogany Sideboard buffet, which you offered fifty dollars and they accepted. Delighted with your new find for a grand total of two hundred and fifty dollars, you set up your guest room and living room with the thought of doing minor cleaning and repairs in spring when the weather got better. At the swap meet a day later, you find a vintage picture frame that would make a perfect house for the stained glass piece you found weeks ago.

Three weeks later, you and your husband are experiencing little red itchy bites on your neck and arms. Assuming the usual flea, mosquitoes or spider bite, you blow it off, but the bites continue. You now run to the store to buy up something to get rid of whatever it is that is biting you. Two months go by, you've done everything you can and you are STILL being bitten, so you decide to call a professional who explains it is bed bugs that you are dealing with.

Ah - if furniture could talk it would have warned you, "hey! I've got bed bugs". The antique bed furniture came from a person's home that had been dealing with a serious bed bug infestation. How were you to know! Sure, it had a lot of black looking dirt spots in all the joints and dust embedded in all the cracks but you assumed you could scrub it up, sand it down and re-finish it.

You now have to flip for a bill for a professional to get rid of your problem. That killer deal isn't such a deal anymore. Could this have been avoided? Sure.

To Salvage Bed Bug Infested Items

Don't give up the luxury of shopping for fabulous finds but remember, the rules of shopping for conversation worthy items have certainly changed.

There are several things that one can do to make sure bed bug infested items do not enter your home or vehicle:

Thoroughly inspect all items for evidence of bed bugs

Always completely wrap and seal any secondhand item before putting it into your vehicle!

If in doubt call in the professionals at Barrier Pest Control to treat items before they enter your home