New Orleans Principal Describes His Battle with a Rat-Infested School and How IPM Solved the Problem!!!

Karen M. Vail

Many of you have dealt with rodents attempting to make their way into schools. Harsh outdoor temperatures, heat, and kitchen aromas leaking from poorly sealed doors lure these rodents to the structure. You are aware of rodent management strategies (school IPM action plans, http://www.extension.org/pages/63911/school-ipm-action-plan-for-rodents#.UqiFSuLWRxU) and luckily so were the folks managing city properties in New Orleans. Claudia Riegel, director of the New Orleans Mosquito, Termite and Rodent Control Board, was called to action when a new principal noticed he was welcomed by a rodent to his office on move in day. Claudia is promoting IPM in New Orleans and knew that it was important to figure out why the rats were found in the school. Over a dozen were found on the school property. To say the structure was in poor repair was an understatement. Built in 1898, window panes were missing, leaks were prevalent and roofs sagging. Needless to say, the students were not performing very well academically. So how did Claudia’s group solve this problem? Inspection revealed the rats were harboring in a locked, abandoned room with a toilet that was located behind the kitchen. They removed the water source, sealed potential entry points and then baited and trapped. Voila, months have passed since the principal has seen a rat.

So as you go about your day and think things aren’t going your way, be grateful you don’t have the same pest pressure as New Orleans. But understand that if you do, there is a solution and its IPM. For more information about the New Orleans rat problem, see the NPR story at http://www.npr.org/2013/12/10/248506088/new-orleans-rat-fighters-go-beyond-baiting-traps. So nice to see a story with a happy ending.
So You Missed the Buggy Buffet? Never Fear, You’ll Have Another Opportunity Next Year!
Karen M. Vail

Why is it deemed socially acceptable in developed countries to eat some arthropods (shrimp, lobster and crab) but not others (insects)? Don’t let societal perceptions dictate your protein sources, let your taste buds decide what is acceptable or not. Every year, around Halloween, Jerome Grant’s FYS 129 class provides an Insect Smorgasbord to those interested in partaking in an insect sampling. The event takes place somewhere on the University of Tennessee’s Institute of Agriculture campus and usually lasts from 3:30 to 5:30. Please share this information with your science teachers so they can join us next year. Entomophagy, or the consumption of insects, is being touted as a solution to the world’s food needs (http://www.theguardian.com/environment/2010/aug/01/insects-food-emissions).

A Digital Microscope Made from a Smartphone and a Few Other Items
Karen M. Vail

Here’s another article we have for your science teachers or really anyone with a curious mind. A Smartphone can be used to create a digital microscope. Just visit our Facebook site at https://www.facebook.com/pages/Urban-Integrated-Pest-Management-in-Tennessee/292662364150306 to link to a video that describes how to create this digital microscope.

Avoid Bed Bugs when Traveling Over the Holidays
Karen M. Vail

When travelling, do the following to avoid bringing bed bugs home:
• **Store** luggage away from beds. Some people store luggage in the bathroom or place it in a sealable plastic bag. Laptops give off heat and will attract bed bugs. When not in use, store a cool laptop in a sealable plastic bag.
• **Inspect** the hotel room before you unpack. You’ll need gloves, a flashlight and magnifying lens. Check behind the headboard, along the mattress seams, and other accessible cracks and crevices. Ask for another room if bed bugs are found.
• **Check** luggage for bed bugs before leaving the hotel.
• **Wash and dry clothes** immediately upon your return home.
For a full explanation see our Bed Bugs in Tennessee website at https://ag.tennessee.edu/bedbugs/Pages/residentsandhomeowners.aspx
As we all prepare to enjoy a few days off with our family and friends, please remember these few short tips to help keep our classrooms, cafeterias, and offices free of places for pests to hide over the holiday break.

Janet Hurley, Texas A&M, Extension Program Specialist– School IPM

The most efficient and effective way to deal with pests is to prevent them in the first place. Teachers play a vital role in pest management in the classroom. They know their room better than anyone else; they see what comes in and say what goes. They make the rules. So why do they have pest critters??? Because insects want the same thing you & I do:

Food, Water & Shelter

…Eliminate these, and the incentive to come in goes away.

FOOD: Whether part of a program to provide breakfast & snacks, or a holiday party, food in the classroom is going to happen. It is the teacher’s job to manage it.
· Okay, that top drawer candy bar or opened bag of munch ‘ems are not being enjoyed by just you. Freezer zip-lock bags or plastic containers with lids are a must-use for this type of stuff.
· Designate an eating area for snacks & treats (preferably on tile).
· Choose foods that are easier to clean up (i.e. bagels instead of donuts or muffins).
· Get the kids to participate in post-snack clean up – tables, chairs and floors. (It’s never too early to teach them to clean!)
· Garbage and recycle bins should be emptied regularly and should never overflow; it may be necessary to empty them more often at this time of year.
· Make sure tile and carpeting gets cleaned regularly – check under furniture for food debris, especially those pieces on rollers.

WATER: This includes ANY beverages, in ANY quantity.
· Leaky faucets & pipes are an oasis for night scavengers like crickets & roaches (common classroom pests). Make sure this maintenance issue gets reported.
· Sugary drinks have a way of getting spilled (try to avoid them in classrooms if you can). Spills should get wiped up immediately; efforts should be taken to get carpets as clean as possible.

SHELTER: Not just the clutter bugs, but organized teachers unknowingly invite critters in by HOW they store their materials.
· Arts, crafts, miscellaneous supplies… Have you used it in the last year? Is there someone else who could use it more? Ask yourself this… often.
· German cockroaches love corrugated cardboard – they are easily transported into buildings this way. Crickets will munch on it. Mice build nests out of it. Any pest may use it as harbor-age. If you’re using cardboard for long term storage – DON’T. Move toward plastic bins or crates instead.
· Clutter is impossible to clean around – next to food, it’s what critters want the most. Stop and take a look around, weigh the benefits and costs of having.

Take control of YOUR classroom. Get the bugs out.
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