

INSIDE THIS ISSUE: PEST CONDUCTIVE CONDITIONS

Effective pest control in a school takes the cooperation of the pest control technician AND the school faculty and staff. If you work in a school, you have a role in pest management. You make everyday decisions that encourage or discourage pests, and you often know when and where pests occur in your area.









As many of you already realize, some areas within a school are more *prone* to pests than others. We call these **Pest Vulnerable Areas** (PVAs). This issue of the Pest Press discusses the common PVAs found in schools.

Why do PVAs exist?

Every school has particular places which are better at offering exactly what all pests are looking for: food, water, and shelter. Though what constitutes food, water, and shelter may vary from one pest to another, pest vulnerable areas tend to offer the best variety.

Where are PVAs?

Pest vulnerable areas often include the following locations within a school:

-  kitchen and cafeteria,
-  faculty lounge
-  custodial storage areas
-  science classrooms,
-  special needs classrooms
-  kindergarten and child care classrooms
-  home economics classrooms
-  cluttered classrooms or storage areas

What we DO when we see evidence of pests.

Many school pests, like cockroaches and mice, are nocturnal so you don't often see them in the day. What you do see is *evidence* of the pest. This evidence may consist of droppings that look similar to coffee grounds (cockroaches), or droppings which look tapered on the ends (mouse droppings). Yes, we look that closely! It is very important to note the presence of "droppings" on one of your school's Pest Sighting Logs so the proper staff member is informed and can attend to the situation.

Droppings, rodent "rubs" (darkening around entrances or

along walls commonly used by mice), and other evidence of pests help your district IPM Specialist and/or Pest Control Professional to identify what types of pests inhabit an area and where monitoring should occur.

PVAs are monitored routinely, but if you report problem areas additional, monitoring "traps" may be appropriately placed and checked monthly. These traps offer a 24-hour view of the pests present in an area. Pests enter whilst foraging for food or mates, and stick to the glue inside the small trap. Some traps contain a scent, flavor, or other chemical attractant for cockroaches.



Once the traps are in place, it is important for school staff not to remove them, even if bugs can be seen on the trap. It is completely normal to find a few critters on a trap, especially if it is the height of insect season and the trap is in a PVA. Much can be deduced from the trap's contents and position, so please never remove or move one! The pests normally found in a monitor trap include cockroaches, crickets, spiders, ants, and silverfish.



The *position* of the pest in the trap indicates what direction it was traveling when it was caught. The *age* of the pest will also help to determine what action may be necessary; immature forms and adults can occur at different times of the year, and may indicate the level of infestation - if any - depending on the pest involved. Additionally, the *condition* of the pest will tell us if it was healthy when it was caught or if some other pest has been nibbling on it for a food source.

WHO EVER THOUGHT SO MUCH COULD BE DEDUCED FROM A PEST MONITOR TRAP?



With this information, your district IPM Specialist will make a determination on what course of action will most effectively reduce this pest. The answer often involves multiple measures, and may include addressing sanitation, maintenance needs, or human habits that are encouraging the pest to return and bring his friends. As with any IPM program, pesticides are used in combination with other strategies, and only least-risk options are utilized.

What can school folks do to make PVAs more manageable?

- ☑ **Don't prop open doors** – you'd be surprised at how many flies, crickets, and other critters scuttle in through an open door
- ☑ **Keep food in tight-sealed containers.** A bag of pretzels or cereal clipped closed is not close at all! Crickets, mice, and many other pests who can chew won't let bag material stop them.
- ☑ **Clean, clean, clean up after yourself.**
 - ✓ Report spills to custodians immediately or thoroughly clean the area yourself;
 - ✓ Keep classroom snack time on tile areas, or at least contained to a designated area; make clean up after snack a task for the kids to help with.
- ☑ **Teacher's lounge – make a cleaning schedule** for counters, fridge and under/inside microwave. Don't leave food out – you'd be surprised at the critters (particularly flies) who visit it.
- ☑ **Close trash can lids.** The best types of cans are those with self-closing lids. They help prevent mosquitoes and bees. Put in a request for this type of outdoor can if your school doesn't already have them; otherwise, keep those lids closed and the bugs out.

You are all experts... really! You are!

We are all experts on our own habits and space, when it comes to pests, whether we realize it or not. When you see evidence of pests, it is important to convey this information to the proper staff so that whatever situation is causing the pests can be fixed. Use the **PEST SIGHTING LOGS** found in your school's main office, kitchen, and teacher's lounge to record your pest observations (including mice!). If you don't see these logs, talk to your principal about adopting the IPM approach.

Information taken from:

University of Florida IFAS Department of Entomology and Nematology.
Issue 6, August2005.

Arizona's IPM in Schools Program

Welcome new school district **Chandler Unified** to the IPM in Schools program! Congrats to this district, as they are yet another of Arizona's who are choosing to the right thing for our children's environmental health.

The **City of Phoenix** has expressed interest in adopting IPM in a city-wide approach! Wow! We are currently working with the city and IPM experts in the state to create lasting partnerships that will result in a sustainable IPM program for our great city. We wish them well as they kick-off their pilot program.

On September 9th, 2005, the Arizona IPM in Schools Coalition was recognized by the Valley Forward Organization with an Environmental Technologies Merit Award. The award was presented to Coalition reps. at the Valley Forward's 25th Annual Environmental Excellence Awards program.

The Valley Forward Organization honors and recognizes candidates each year in a variety of environmental classifications. The program is Arizona's oldest and largest environmental competition. CONGRATS to the Arizona IPM in Schools Coalition for this great honor!

OK, who can ID this month's IPM-inator?



Dr. Marc Lame, Indiana University

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A message from the
IPM-inator:
.....
Keep the clutter
down or I'll send
in the CAT! Oh
yehh, and has
anyone seen my
bait-gun? It's
blue with a pink
plunger?
.....

For more information on IPM in Schools in Arizona, contact Dawn Gouge or Jennifer Snyder, (520) 568-2273, dhgouge@ag.arizona.edu or jsnyder@ag.arizona.edu



Few bugs are bad! More than 95% of all insect species are beneficial to humans.