

# Insec(tc)ure\*: Are you insecure about your insect cures?

A UT Urban IPM Lab Newsletter for the Pest Management Industry

## Being Thankful – Tennessee Pest Control Industry Revenue Ranks 7<sup>th</sup> in the Nation!

*By Karen M. Vail*

*Professor and Extension Urban Entomologist  
Entomology & Plant Pathology*

It's the end of the year which often promotes reflection and thinking about ways to improve programs, techniques, and returns. The Tennessee pest control industry has much to be proud of. Our analysis (Hughes and Vail 2024, <https://tiny.utk.edu/TPCImpact>) indicated that the impact of the pest control industry on Tennessee's economy is \$1.029 billion when including direct, indirect and induced values using the IMPLAN model approach described by Winkles et al. 2024. This impact compared favorably to that of the 2021 Tennessee agricultural economy (Menard 2023) – the cotton farming economic impact was estimated at \$0.348 billion; greenhouse, nursery and floriculture production at \$0.576 billion; beef cattle at \$0.866 billion; and poultry and egg production at \$1.058 billion. Yesterday Brian Forschler, a professor at the University of Georgia and co-author of the Winkles paper, forwarded another economic analysis by Winkles using the North American Industry Classification System ([NAICS](#)) data from 2022. In this analysis, the Tennessee pest control industry ranked 7<sup>th</sup> in the nation in revenue generation behind California, Florida, Texas, Georgia, North Carolina and New York. I'm so thankful to Forschler and Winkles for starting the movement to better understand the economic impact of our industry and for your efforts that placed us at such a prominent ranking! Keep up the good work.

## Treating Your Elderly Customers with Kindness, Especially this Time of Year

The day before the Thanksgiving holiday, the UT Urban IPM Lab conducted a building-wide bed bug and cockroach inspection of a low-income highrise for the elderly and disabled. (I kept this information to myself to not discourage any family members from joining our celebration due to fear of bringing pests back to their homes.) We recommend conducting these quick inspections at least twice a year, but possibly up to 4 times per year if needed. It's a basic approach to find all, many unreported, infestations of these two pests. In this building, most units were one-bedroom. For bed bugs, one person enters the bedroom, checks the outer surfaces of the bedding and then removes the sheets and checks the outer surfaces of the mattress and boxsprings. Another person checks the upholstered furniture, checking cracks, crevices, seams and zippers. Pillows may be flipped but the furniture and bed are not. Obviously, we can miss a few bed bugs by not flipping furniture or box springs and removing dust covers, but we should catch them at the next building-wide inspection. If we see signs of bed bugs such as fecal specking,

cast skins or eggshells, dead bed bugs, or bed bug control products, we place BlackOut Bedbug Detectors under or against the legs of the bed and upholstered furniture.

We require someone from the housing authority to open doors, and typically, this person places the glue boards for cockroach monitoring. We used the Bell Labs' Trapper monitors that break into three. One glue board is placed on the floor near the (1) refrigerator and (2) stove and another (3) under the kitchen sink. A fourth is placed behind the toilet or under the bathroom sink. In two weeks, we return to inspect the cockroach and bed bug monitors.

On this inspection, we were fortunate that the housing manager and the pest management company owner and technician accompanied us. We had over 100 apartments to inspect, and I was hoping to complete this on Tuesday so that I could start my Thanksgiving journey early the next day. Typically, it takes two people about 3.5 minutes to complete a quick inspection in a studio or one-bedroom apartment (Vail and Chandler 2021, <https://tiny.utk.edu/BWBBInspection>), but we were much faster that day. So we are thankful for the extra help.

In all the buildings/complexes we have inspected over the years, only one small group of duplexes was found to be without bed bugs. At this location, we found one room with an active infestation thus far. This excellent lack of bed bugs was attributed to an extensive effort using whole room heating 3 – 4 years ago. I suspect the cockroach monitoring results won't be so flattering. In the last two years, we've averaged 76% cockroach infestation rates.

Because I wanted to finish the inspection in one day, I pushed myself to work as quickly as possible. In doing so, I didn't always provide the best customer support. We generally rely upon the housing personnel to interact with the residents. They know their background and current situation and we are there to inspect. But sometimes, we need to step back and provide some kindness too. Near the end of one inspection, we entered the room and complimented the resident on her team swag. I thought we were being friendly and making connections, but it wasn't enough. The inspection of the living room furniture revealed something in the folded crevices of the sofa arm. We retrieved a lint roller sheet, folded it and inserted the edge into the crease. Removing the sheet exposed a dried bed bug. We explained to the resident that it was dead and crispy and had probably been there since the last treatment, but to make sure, we wanted to place monitors that we would check in two weeks. As we gathered in the hallway, she came out the door with tears in her eyes. Evidently this sofa has been problematic through the years. We re-explained that we thought it was signs from an old infestation and no need to worry about it until we knew if it was active. We talked some more. She didn't have anyone to visit with over the holiday. Several of us offered a few words of kindness and the manager told her she'd check on her later.

As you go about your service route, be perceptive to people who may be struggling. This time of year increases the feelings of loneliness for some people, especially the elderly. A few kind words from you may help them get through the day. For more advice on working with elderly loneliness, see <https://www.ncoa.org/article/four-steps-to-combat-loneliness-in-seniors-during-the-holiday-and-beyond/>.

*May you all find time to recover from a year's hard work and prepare to embrace the challenges of the new year! Looking forward to seeing you at some of our planned activities next year.*

## A Sampling of Upcoming Category 7 PMP Educational Opportunities

### Distribution, Status and Management of Native and Invasive Termites in the USA

January 24, 2025; 1:00 to 5:00 PM (eastern time), 12:00 to 4:00 PM (central time)

Registration: [https://zoom.us/webinar/register/WN\\_ghH39cm\\_T0215s7-fw4Rlw#/registration](https://zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_ghH39cm_T0215s7-fw4Rlw#/registration)

Attendance is free, and credit has been applied for in 12 states.

**Program Overview.** This 4-hour webinar will be focused on identification, current status, and basic methods of control of subterranean and drywood termites, with particular emphasis on the Formosan subterranean termite, *Coptotermes formosanus*. The intended audience is the pest control industry in the Southeastern U.S., and in areas, such as California, outside the southeast where Formosan termites are known to exist. This training presentation is an output of the North American Termite Survey (NATS) working group, supported by the Southern IPM Center.

1:00 to 1:05 “NATS working group introduction and goals” – Dr. Aaron R. Ashbrook, Assistant Professor, Department of Entomology, Louisiana State University, Baton Rouge, LA.

1:05 to 1:30 “Tales of termite trails: how did the Formosan subterranean termite get here” – Dr. Claudia Hussenader, Professor, Department of Entomology, Louisiana State University, Baton Rouge, LA.

1:30 to 1:50 2-minute recordings of NATS working group members providing updates to FST distribution maps in their states. (KY AR not included as no reported FST so far)

Alabama- Drs. Nobuaki Mizumoto or Xing Ping Hu

California- Drs. Siavash Taravati or Chow-Yang Lee

Florida- Dr. Thomas Chouvenc

Georgia- Dr. Dan Suiter

Louisiana- Dr. Carrie Cottone

Mississippi- Dr. Jose Santos Portugal

North Carolina- Dr. Chris Hayes

South Carolina- Dr. Eric Benson

Tennessee- Dr. Karen Vail

Texas- Drs. Robert Puckett or Janet Hurley

1:50 to 2:00 10-minute break

2:00 to 2:05 Pre-survey for identification training

2:05 to 2:55 “Formosan subterranean termite alate identification and differentiating them from co-swarming alates” - Dr. Thomas Chouvenc, Associate Professor, Department of Entomology and Nematology, University of Florida Ft. Lauderdale Research and Education Center, Ft. Lauderdale, FL.

2:55 to 3:00 Post-survey for identification training to capture a change in knowledge

3:00 to 3:05 5-minute break

3:05 to 3:55 “Subterranean and drywood termite management” - Dr. Brian Forschler, Professor, Department of Entomology, University of Georgia, Athens, GA.

3:55 to 4:00 5-minute break

4:00 to 4:50 "Formosan subterranean termite inspections, safety, and proper applications" - Dr. Faith Oi,  
Department of Entomology and Nematology, University of Florida, Gainesville, FL.

## **January 15, 2025**

### **ETPCA Smoky Mountain Conference**

7:30 AM - 4:30 PM

UT Conference Center

600 Henley St,

Knoxville, TN 37902

<https://www.etpca.org/event-5794725>

## **January 21, 2025**

### **General Pest and Rodent Control (GRC) Licensing Training**

8:30 AM - 1:30 PM Central time

Rutherford County Extension Office

315 John R. Rice Blvd.

Murfreesboro, TN 37129

[https://secure.touchnet.com/C21610\\_ustores/web/product\\_detail.jsp?PRODUCTID=56&SINGLESTORE=true](https://secure.touchnet.com/C21610_ustores/web/product_detail.jsp?PRODUCTID=56&SINGLESTORE=true)

## **January 21, 2025**

### **Wood-destroying Organisms (WDO) Licensing Training**

12:30 PM - 5:40 PM Central time

Rutherford County Extension Office

315 John R. Rice Blvd.,

Murfreesboro, TN 37129

[https://secure.touchnet.com/C21610\\_ustores/web/product\\_detail.jsp?PRODUCTID=56&SINGLESTORE=true](https://secure.touchnet.com/C21610_ustores/web/product_detail.jsp?PRODUCTID=56&SINGLESTORE=true)

## **January 23-24, 2025**

### **Tennessee Mosquito and Vector Control Association**

Ellington Agricultural Center

Ed Jones Auditorium

440 Hogan Rd

Nashville, TN 37220

<https://www.tennmosquito.com/annualmeeting>

## **January 28-31, 2025**

### **Second New Orleans Urban Pest Management Symposium**

Historic Gallier Hall

545 St Charles Ave,

New Orleans, LA 70130

<https://vectoroutreach.org/event/new-orleans-urban-pest-management-symposium/>

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### **Precautionary Statement**

To protect people and the environment, pesticides should be used safely. This is everyone's responsibility, especially the user. Read and follow label directions carefully before you buy, mix, apply, store or dispose of a pesticide. According to laws regulating pesticides, they must be used only as directed by the label and registered for use in your state.

### **Disclaimer**

This publication contains pesticide recommendations that are subject to change at any time. The recommendations in this publication are provided only as a guide. It is always the pesticide applicator's responsibility, by law, to read and follow all current label directions for the specific pesticide being used. The label always takes precedence over the recommendations found in this publication.

Use of trade or brand names in this publication is for clarity and information; it does not imply approval of the product to the exclusion of others that may be of similar, suitable composition, nor does it guarantee or warrant the standard of the product. The author(s), the University of Tennessee Institute of Agriculture and University of Tennessee Extension assume no liability resulting from the use of these recommendations.

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