

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

A University of Tennessee Urban IPM Lab Newsletter for the Pest Management Industry

Kathy Booker to Retire June 1, 2026

Karen Vail, UT Entomology & Plant Pathology

We knew this day would arrive. At the April 7th Pest Control Advisory Board Meeting of the Tennessee Department of Agriculture (TDA), Kathy Booker (KB) announced that she would be retiring from the TDA on June 1, 2026.

Many of us knew Kathy as the Pesticide Program Director in TDA's Consumer and Industry Services Division. But she was with TDA long before that. With a BS degree in biochemistry from Tennessee State University, she started as a lab tech in 1981 and held various positions before attaining the Pesticide Program Director position, where she oversaw the state's personnel responsible for regulating pesticide use, sale and distribution. With the new restructuring at TDA, she now heads the commercial applicator inspections.



Figure 1. Kathy Booker at her last Pest Control Advisory Board Meeting.



Figure 2. Faye Golden of Cook's Pest Control presents Kathy Booker with a thank you and happy retirement cake.

KB is reliable, hard-working, dedicated and determined to serve the people of our state and has served as a role model for many of us. Because her division was often understaffed and underfunded, it wasn't uncommon for KB, an administrator, to answer phone calls and emails regarding our pesticide-related inquiries. Others recognized her excellence and devotion when she was awarded the Governor's Excellence in Service Award in 2024 and the Tennessee Pest Control Association's Lifetime Achievement Award in 2021. KB not only impacted the Tennessee pest control industry, but she also served other state and regional associations.

She will be greatly missed by those of us who interacted with her regularly. But, for her, it's time for some rest and relaxation. Think of us, KB, occasionally, when you're relaxing on a cruise, sitting on a beach, or visiting a site of historical significance.

Seeking Pest Management Companies in East Tennessee to Partner in Mosquito Management

Rebecca Trout Fryxell, UT Entomology and Plant Pathology

We are seeking pest management companies in East Tennessee interested in partnering to reduce mosquitoes that transmit La Crosse virus at residential case sites. This initiative focuses on integrated mosquito management strategies, community education, and targeted interventions to protect public health. Companies with experience in mosquito control, source reduction, and homeowner engagement are especially encouraged to respond. Participation may include collaboration on pilot projects, implementation of best practices, and coordination with public health and research teams. If your company is interested in contributing to this important effort, please self-identify by filling out this form [La Crosse Virus Residential Management Interest Survey - Fill out form](#). We hope to build partnerships and explore opportunities to rapidly prevent, detect, and respond to cases.

Upcoming Category 7 PMP Educational Opportunities

Wood-destroying Organisms (WDO) and General Pest and Rodent Control (GRC) Licensing Training, July 14 and October 27, 2026

<https://psep.tennessee.edu/licensed-pest-control-operator/>

Central Region Extension Office, 5201 Marchant Dr., Nashville, TN 37211

Register:

https://secure.touchnet.com/C21610_ustores/web/store_cat.jsp?STOREID=1&CATID=14&SINGLESTORE=true

TPCA's PestEd: Virtual CEUs

<https://tpca.info/Calendar>

April 29: Glue Boards Alone Will Not Solve a Brown Recluse Problem

May 27: What's Really Eating Away at Your Clients' Stuff?

June 24: Mosquito and Tick Surveillance in Areas with Limited Infrastructure

Pest Control Advisory Board to the Tennessee Department of Agriculture

<https://www.tn.gov/agriculture/news.html>

July 15, October 28, 9:30 am

Typical location: Ellington Agricultural Center, Porter Building, 436 Hogan Road, Nashville, TN

2026 TPCA Summer Conference

<https://tpca.info/event-6464633>

July 22 - 24

Crowne Plaza, Knoxville

12th Annual Bed Bug, Cockroach and Rodent Management Meeting

<https://tiny.utk.edu/2026BBEvent>

August 5

UT Conference Center, Knoxville

ACE (Associate Certified Entomologist) Prep Course Fall

<https://tiny.utk.edu/ACEPrepFall2026>

August 17 - December 7

Virtual, Monday evenings 5 - 6:30 pm ET

ACE (Associate Certified Entomologist) Prep Course Fall 2026

Are you certified in pesticide applicator category 7 with a minimum of 5 years of verifiable pest management experience in the United States? Then you may be ready to become an ACE, an associate certified entomologist. Before you can become an ACE, you will need to provide two letters of professional reference, be willing to adhere to the [ACE Code of Ethics](#), [complete the application and pay the application fee to the Entomological Society of America](#) and pass an online test of your knowledge of structural pest control. The program and its benefits are explained in its entirety at <https://entocert.org/ace>. The application process is separate from the training offered below.

To help you prepare for the exam, Dr. Karen Vail, Professor and Extension Urban Entomologist of the UT Department of Entomology & Plant Pathology will provide an ACE Prep Course this fall. All training sessions will be virtual and held from 5 pm to at least 6:30 pm on select Mondays via Zoom. By offering online training, we no longer limit participants to being within a few hours' drive of campus! Sign up at <https://tiny.utk.edu/ACEPrepFall2026>.

2026 Training Date	Subject
August 17	Why Study Pests in the Built Environment
August 24	Integrated Pest Management and Tools
August 31	Insecticides and Modes of Action
September 7	Labor Day – No Class
September 14	Pesticide Safety, Laws & Labels
September 21	Insect Biology and Morphology
September 28	Ants
October 5	Fall Break – No class
October 12	Cockroaches
October 19	Flies
October 26	Stinging and Biting Arthropods
November 2	Stored Products Pests
November 9	Occasional Invaders
November 16	Wood-destroying Organisms
November 23	Common Commensal Pests/DI
November 30	Extended review
December 7* 5 pm – 8 pm	Exam

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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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