

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

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

Julia Willingham Passes Board Certified Entomologist Exam!

Karen Vail, *UT Entomology & Plant Pathology*

Julia Willingham, a 2016 Master of Science graduate of the University of Tennessee's Entomology and Plant Pathology Department, passed the Entomological Society of America's Board Certified Entomologist (BCE) Exam with a specialty in Urban/Industrial Entomology in May. Julia first joined the workforce as an Extension agent and later became the county Extension director. After serving as the business development manager for SiteOne Landscape Supply, she is now a corporate technical manager at Cook's Pest Control. Congratulations, Julia - we are proud of you!



Figure 1. Julia Willingham holding the certificate announcing her Board Certified Entomologist status.

Prepare for Asian Needle Ant Mating Flights

We continue to receive notifications of sting responses to the Asian needle ant, *Brachyponera chinensis* workers (Figure 2). In fact, from June 26 - 30, I had three inquiries. One of the email senders indicated that our description in the publication, **The Asian Needle Ant: A Medically and Ecologically Important Emerging Pest**, <https://solutions.tennessee.edu/publication/W1379/>, was misleading and prevented them from identifying this stinging ant in a timely manner. It's only under magnification that the lighter brown legs and mandibles are easily seen. From a distance, the ant looks entirely black or dark brown (Figure 3).



Figure 3. Although the legs and mandibles of the Asian needle ant are usually lighter-colored than the body, from a distance, the ant appears entirely black or dark brown. Credit: Karen Vail, UT EPP

Remember, the winged females can also sting and will do so when trapped against clothing. **Mating flights take place during warm and humid times of the year, i.e., NOW.** One of my first submissions of this ant's winged forms was from a 2011 July 4th party held on a balcony. The guests thought they were being bitten by mosquitoes, but an entomologist was present and collected samples of male and female alates. These alates often gather around lights or streetlamps during mating flights. Something else to keep in mind as we celebrate our nation's 250th birthday.



Figure 2. Severe reaction to an Asian needle ant sting. Credit: email submission.

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

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

Registration closes July 29

ACE (Associate Certified Entomologist) Prep Course Fall

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

August 17 - December 7

Virtual, Monday evenings 5 - 6:40 pm ET

Register before August 5th to ensure the class will be held

GET Educated.

12TH ANNUAL TENNESSEE

BED BUG, COCKROACH & RODENT MANAGEMENT MEETING WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 5, 2026

UNIVERSITY OF TENNESSEE CONFERENCE CENTER | 600 HENLEY STREET | KNOXVILLE, TENNESSEE 37902

Check-in starts at 7:00 AM | Meeting 8:00 - 4:00 EDT

Free parking in the [Locust Street Garage](#) with the UT

SCHEDULE

- > **8:00 – 9:00 Housing Pest Management and Other Updates from the University of Tennessee** Dr. Karen Vail, University of Tennessee
- > **9:00 - 10:00 The Rodent Playbook: IPM Strategies That Hold Up** Timmy Madera, The New Orleans Mosquito, Termite and Rodent Control Board
- 10:00 – 10:30 Break with Vendors
- > **10:30 – 11:30 Creating Comprehensive Mosquito Control Programs** Cory Goeltzenleuchter, Northwest Exterminating
- 11:30 – 12:30 Lunch provided
- > **12:30 – 1:30 Public Housing Termite Control Challenges** Wally Holden, Rentokil-Terminix
- > **1:30 - 2:30 Cockroach Control: New Research and Trends for the Eastern US** Ben Grady, University of Kentucky
- 2:30 – 3:00 Break with Vendors
- > **3:00 – 4:00 Stump the Speaker Panel**
Audience members ask the speakers to solve difficult cases

PMP CEUs Applied For

Who Should Attend?

- > Pest Management Professionals
- > Housing and other professionals
- > Anyone interested in solving housing pest problems!

Registration Fees

PMPs \$125

Others \$50

Online Registration Only

Registration closes July 29, 2026

Register at

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

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 held virtually via Zoom from 5 pm to at least 6:40 pm on select Mondays. 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.

Programs in agriculture and natural resources, 4-H youth development, family and consumer sciences, and resource development. University of Tennessee Institute of Agriculture, US Department of Agriculture and county governments cooperating. UT Extension provides equal opportunities in programs and employment.