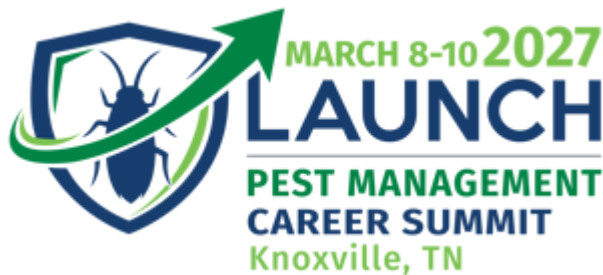


Insec(tc)ure*: Are you insecure about your insect cures?

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

NPMA Chooses the University of Tennessee Knoxville as the Site for Its First Career Summit!



Of all the campuses in the United States, the **National Pest Management Association** chose the University of Tennessee Knoxville to host its first-ever student-centered event, the **LAUNCH Pest Management Career Summit, March 8-10, 2027**.

This event will give students a unique opportunity to learn about pest management careers that offer strong job security and remain highly resistant to economic downturns

and AI-driven disruption. The summit will provide students with the opportunity to learn how their major, whether it be biology or other sciences, tech, business, marketing, human resources, operations, education, or even entrepreneurship, fits into the pest management industry.

At LAUNCH, students will compete in team projects and hands-on field challenges, walk the Employer Engagement Zone to meet companies hiring across many disciplines, and get a free professional headshot!

While the program is tailored to students, pest management companies can participate in the Employer Engagement Zone, where you could find your next hire! The last time I checked, there were plenty of openings for pest control companies to participate in various ways. You can find opportunities for pest control companies [here](#). More information about the entire LAUNCH can be found at <https://www.npmapestworld.org/attend/industry-events-calendar/launch-pest-management-career-summit/>.

Updates on the Tennessee Pest Control Workforce Pipeline Initiative

I introduced you to our Tennessee Pest Control Workforce Pipeline initiative in the December 2025 issue of [Insec\(tc\)ure](#), and I wanted to share an update this month. After spending 8 months developing an undergraduate urban entomology class with a field trip and external industry speakers, I learned in June that my 100% Extension appointment would prohibit me from teaching this class without my teaching time (salary and benefits) and a per-student fee paid to the Herbert College of Agriculture. At our September meeting, Ryan Griffin presented a proposed 6-week hybrid pest control workforce training program through TBR. The group strongly supported positioning the program as a "finishing school" pipeline from high school to the pest control industry, with Pell Grant eligibility as a key goal. Faye Golden (Cook's Pest Control) and Lexus Jenkins (All-American Pest Control) presented updated high school and college recruitment flyers with salary data, which are nearing completion. We hope to get volunteers from each TPCA region to commit to using these flyers in career fairs in their area. We discussed the NPMA Launch event as a key promotional opportunity, and the need to encourage participation. The next meeting is scheduled for October 30th. Let me know if you would like to join us.

Jorō Spider Expanding Range in Tennessee

It's that time of year when Jorō spiders reach the large, showy adult female stage, and reports are coming in from around the state. I thought this spider (Figures 1 and 2) was an adult female, but she died during molting a few days later, revealing that the image here is a late-instar immature female. Recently, photos of spiders were submitted to me from Knox, Davidson and other counties. A pest management professional found a Jorō spider in Davidson County and recorded a new county record for Tennessee. You too can become famous by reporting new county Jorō spider finds at this website:

<https://jorowatch.org>. I've written about Jorō spiders before, so I won't elaborate here, except to share a new publication from the University of Tennessee Extension, <https://solutions.tennessee.edu/publication/W1415/>, by Rebekka Horn (University of Tennessee), David Nelsen (Southern Adventist University), and Midhula Gireesh (University of Tennessee). The images in the UT Extension publication are amazing! The map below (Figure 3) shows the current Joro spider distribution. If you find a Joro spider outside its documented range, please take a diagnostic photo and upload it and the location data to the [Joro Watch](https://jorowatch.org) website.

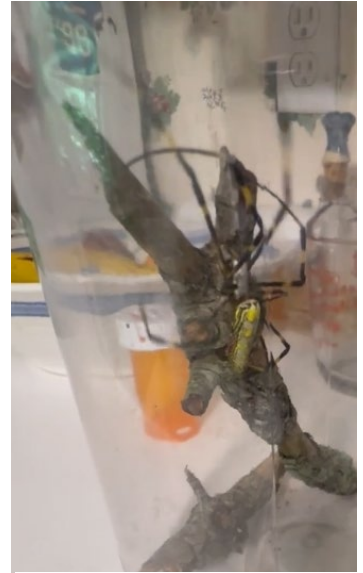


Figure 1. Dorsal view of Jorō spider submitted from Knox County, TN.

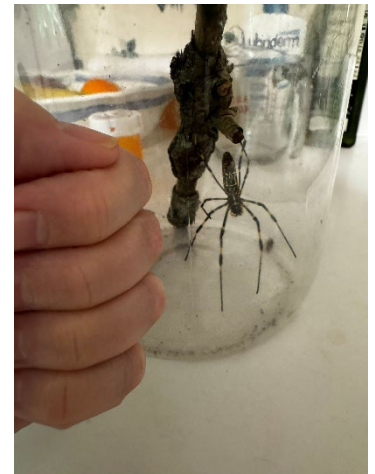
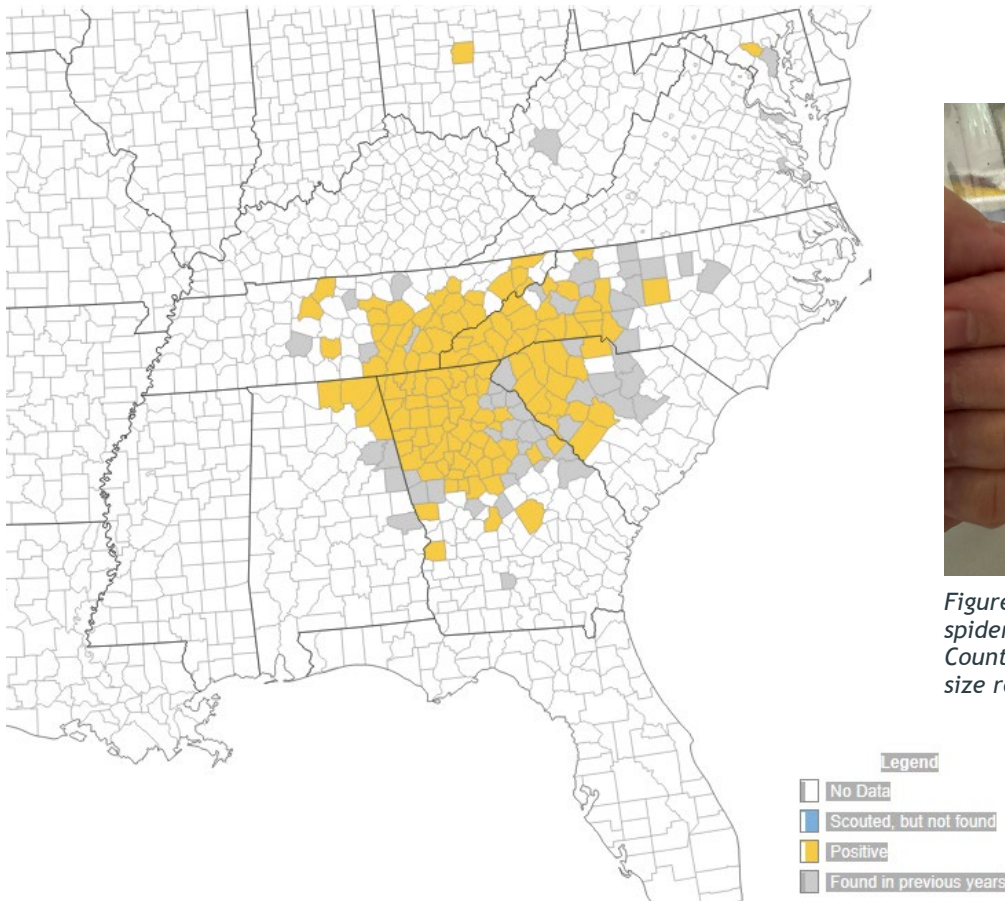


Figure 2. Ventral view of Jorō spider submitted from Knox County, TN. My fist provides a size reference.

Figure 3. Joro Spider distribution as of September 25, 2026. Photo credit: EDDMapS. 2026. Early Detection & Distribution Mapping System. The University of Georgia - Center for Invasive Species and Ecosystem Health. Available online at <http://www.eddmaps.org/>; last accessed September 25, 2026.

Upcoming Category 7 PMP Educational Opportunities

ACE (Associate Certified Entomologist) Prep Course Fall

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

August 17 - December 7, 2026

Virtual, Monday evenings 5 - 6:40 pm ET

2 category 7 TDA CEUs per Monday (see next page for details)

Wood-destroying Organisms (WDO) and General Pest and Rodent Control (GRC) Licensing Training

October 27, 2026, January 26, 2027, April 27, 2027, July 20, 2027 and October 19, 2027

Rutherford County UT Ext Office, 315 John R. Rice Blvd., Murfreesboro, TN

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

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>

October 28, 9:30 am CT

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

55th Annual University of Kentucky Pest Control Short Course

<https://kyshortcourse.mgcafe.uky.edu/>

November 3-5, 2026, Lexington, KY

TPCA's PestEd Virtual CEU-November: New and Upcoming Research on German Cockroach Management

<https://tpca.info/Calendar/Events>

Nov 17, 2026 8:00 AM CT

2026 Smoky Mountain Conference

<https://tpca.info/Calendar/Events>

January 20, 2027

UT Conference Center, Knoxville

13th Annual Bed Bug, Cockroach and Rodent Management Meeting

August 4, 2027

UT Conference Center, Knoxville

Registration closes July 28

2027 TPCA Summer Conference

<https://tpca.info/Calendar/Events>

September 20-22, 2027

Embassy Suites Chattanooga, Hamilton Place

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 must provide two letters of professional reference, agree 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
Schedule with ProctorU	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.