



The State of Our Future



2023 SUMMER NEWSLETTER

# THE PEST DISPATCH

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## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Matt Lang, Belle City Pest Solutions, LLC • [bellecitypestsolutions@gmail.com](mailto:bellecitypestsolutions@gmail.com)



As I look back over the past few months, I'm struck by how much happens at our annual conference that continues to benefit us throughout the year. I hope all who attended PestCon found it beneficial and walked away with learning something new that they have passed on to their team.

Besides the relationships established during the conference, I find it so cool to walk the vendor room and discuss products. Sometimes they're new but also old favorites. It's nice to hear how others are using them and I inevitably pick up pointers and techniques. The vendor reception is always a hit and, truthfully, I'm in my element being able to indulge in an "adult" beverage while having conversations about the pest control work that we all love doing.

Five months later, I still laugh out loud remembering when Rich Williams strapped on his battery-powered mosquito blower and fired that up. I wonder if he sleeps with it on! All jokes aside, the vendors did a terrific job and I appreciate all they give to support our two-day event, not to mention their ads and articles in this newsletter. Without the ongoing support that they give, we wouldn't exist.

Our industry remains strong and united, especially when dealing with the many laws that we have to navigate, and when necessary it takes all of us to have a voice and speak

(Continued on next page)

# PRESIDENT, CONT.

up for what's right within our field. I appreciate Sara Knilans from Bell Labs taking so much time to research and present information on the proposed EPA change act. With help from the NPMA, we were able to submit a letter to over a dozen agencies that oversee the EPA, stressing the importance of rodenticides being used by certified structural pest control operators. As you all know, the bill that included a laundry list of changes would hurt not only small companies but also large. At the end of the day, I feel that we in the WPCA community are doing it right and being safe because of the training we have from attending PestCon year after year. I hope all of you took the proposed bill very seriously and I appreciated those who submitted their feedback—along with feedback from customers. At the end of the day, the customer is the one who would suffer and could cripple the industry that we all love.

As I write this, Mother Nature is giving us some beautiful weather, although we could certainly use more rain. Summer is here and I know that we are all busy and working long hours. I hope you are having a safe and profitable season.

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# WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT THE LANDSCAPE REGISTRY

Lyncee Zuehls, Pesticide Program Manager, Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection • lyncee.zuehls@wisconsin.gov

Did you know Wisconsin has a Landscape Registry? If you didn't know, you might wonder what the landscape registry is

and what it can do for you, and what may be required from your company.

## REGISTRANT INFORMATION

The Landscape Registry, which is offered by the Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, allows Wisconsin residents to be notified twelve hours prior to a commercial pesticide application to neighboring landscape (turf, ornamental or mulched area). To be on the registry, the individual must apply by paper application or online between November 1st and February 1st and will need to reapply every year

within that time frame in order to be on the registry for the following season.

When registering, the person provides their contact information so that lawncare and pest control professionals can notify them when treating a property they listed. Properties can only be registered if they are located on or immediately adjacent to the block where the person lives.

The registry is not available for plain fertilizer applications or for pesticide applications to:

- Properties beyond the individual's block or adjacent blocks
- Farm fields or other agricultural productions
- Buildings
- Utility or transportation right of ways

## BUSINESS INFORMATION

The Landscape Registry list goes live on the DATCP website on March 15th of each year. Once the list is published, there are no revisions made to it. If your customers' address is on the list, you will need to contact the registrants who asked to be notified. Your contact must come at least twelve hours prior to the landscape application. Landscape applications include spraying for mosquitos, spot treatments in the yard, as well as turf and ornamental applications.

The advanced notice must include **all** of the following:

- The address to be treated
- The scheduled application date
- The name, address, and telephone number of the business making the application
- The pesticides that may be used (brand name, product name, or common chemical name)

If you have any questions about the landscape registry or the requirements, you can check out our website for more details [https://datcp.wi.gov/Pages/Programs\\_Services/LandPestReg.aspx](https://datcp.wi.gov/Pages/Programs_Services/LandPestReg.aspx) or email [datcplandscaperegistry@wi.gov](mailto:datcplandscaperegistry@wi.gov).

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# COPING WITH DEAD RODENT ODORS

Bill Vaughan, Earth Care products  
bvaughan@cleartheair.com

Pest control professionals are often confronted with horrible odors from dead rodents. The death could have been natural, from the use of a rodenticide, or from a trap that struck the rodent, did not capture it, but was fatal. If the technician is lucky, they can find and remove the carcass. If the carcass is found and removed, the area should be treated to avoid lingering foul odors from the body fluids.

Dead rodents can end up in the attic, wall void, insulation, crawl space or some inaccessible place. Demolition is an option to find and remove the dead carcass. However, this can be very costly and may not be successful in finding the carcass. In addition, the customer may not want demolition to occur due

to expense and mess. If the dead carcass is in or behind a masonry wall demolition is not an option.

## OUTCOMES FROM A PCP SEARCH

**Finds and removes carcass.** In this case, the technician should remove or treat the affected area to rid it of the odor from the body fluids that have soaked into the surface. If the carcass is on insulation, the insulation should be removed. If it is on a structural member, the structural member should be treated to remove the odor. Otherwise a money losing call back could occur.

**Searches for the carcass and cannot find it.** The technician may suspect the carcass is in an attic

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in the insulation somewhere, or in a crawl space, or a wall void, or in some inaccessible place. After spending considerable time looking for the carcass, they are not able to find it.

**Knows location of carcass but would require demolition to remove.** It could be in a wall void or in an inaccessible crawl space. If it is in or behind a masonry wall then demolition would not be viable.

### DEALING WITH THE ODOR

**Do nothing:** After hunting and not finding and removing the carcass the technician can tell the customer the odor will most likely disappear in a couple weeks and to just spray some room fragrance to cover up the odor.

**Masking agents:** These work well in that they cover up or mask an unpleasant smell with a more desirable fragrance. They also work right away. Sometimes a fragrance may be offensive to the customer. In either case you end up with a blend of a pleasant fragrance and dead rodent odor. Also, some customers are allergic to certain fragrances. When the fragrance wears off then the customer is left with the foul odor once again which can result in a money losing call back. The foul odor will persist until the carcass has totally dehydrated which could take two weeks or longer. Many such products are readily available and too numerous to mention.

**Ozone generators:** They cannot run in a room where humans or animals are present because ozone attacks the mucus membranes in the lungs and destroys fabrics. The machine must run for at least one hour, then the room must be aired out and the machine must be retrieved. If the carcass is not found and removed the odor will return when the machine is no longer running. This method is typically more costly since the technician would need to be on site two times, once to install and close up the structure, and a second time to make sure the machine is off, open up the structure to air it out and remove the machine. This would be the least desirable solution due to the health hazard, the cost of the machine, and the time on site required and the likelihood of the odor reappearing creating a call back. In addition, there is a potential liability issue. Ozone generators are often sold online falsely as air purifiers and should be avoided.

**Enzyme sprays:** They are usually very effective in eliminating airborne odors quickly. Enzyme sprays must come into contact with the odor producer; therefore the carcass must be found. If the dead carcass is found in an attic on insulation the technician should remove the carcass and the insulation the animal was laying on to eliminate the odor. If the carcass is on a structural member, then it should be treated with the enzyme. If not, a return visit may be requested due to the residual odor. In addition, if demolition is required to remove the carcass such as in a wall void, then the cost and time on site increase significantly, not to mention possible issues with the quality of the repair work. In addition, there is no guarantee of finding the dead carcass.

**Anions:** These are negatively charged particles that attract ions (positively charged particles), just like a magnet. Most odor molecules such as dead rodent odors, urine, musty mildew odors, etc. are ions. The anions attract ions, which cling to the surface of the anions. Typically, then an ion exchange takes place giving up one atom of oxygen or nitrogen and in the process totally changing the makeup of the ion, which no longer has any odor. Anions constantly adsorb the odor from a dead carcass even if the carcass is not found and removed. Assuming there is a dead rodent in an attic or wall void, to get rid of the odor simply hang a bag in every room where you smell the odor.

If the carcass is in an attic or crawl space hang an additional bag in that area as well, but always hang at least one bag in the room where people are. It is best to hang one bag per 10 square metres (100 square feet). The odor should be gone in 24 hours.

Activated carbon (AC) can be used as an anion to adsorb odors but there are several drawbacks besides the messy black dust. AC pores clog reducing its effective life to remove odors, especially when it is expected to last until the dead carcass dehydrates. AC absorbs oxygen as well so care should be taken when used in confined spaces where people are without sufficient ventilation to replenish the oxygen. AC is highly flammable and the dust is explosive when exposed to heat or flame. The presence of water assists ignition, as do contaminants such as oil.

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# 2023 SPONGY MOTH SEASON IN WISCONSIN

PJ Liesch, Extension Entomologist,  
UW Madison Insect Diagnostic Lab • pliesch@wisc.edu

Spongy moth (*Lymantria dispar*) season officially began here in Wisconsin in early May when the Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection (DATCP) Pest Survey Program ([https://datcp.wi.gov/Pages/Programs\\_Services/PestSurvey.aspx](https://datcp.wi.gov/Pages/Programs_Services/PestSurvey.aspx)) reported caterpillars emerging from an egg mass in far southwestern Wisconsin. We saw caterpillar emergence across much of southern Wisconsin and, as things continued to warm up, the pattern pushed further north in the state.

We may be facing a challenging year from this invasive insect. Dry conditions suppressed a beneficial fungal disease (*Entomophaga maimaiga*) the last two years and allowed spongy moth populations to build up. Along these lines, DATCP reported a 102% increase in male spongy moths caught in trapping surveys last year. Likewise, the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (DNR) Forest Health Team reported a significant uptick in defoliation last year—from 294 acres defoliated in



2021 to over 85,000 acres defoliated in 2022.

It's hard to know how much damage will ultimately occur on yard and forest trees in 2023. However, you can get an estimate of potential defoliation by counting egg masses (photo left). Each overwintered spongy moth egg mass contains upwards of 1,000

eggs, so a yard with dozens of egg masses could face tens of thousands of hungry caterpillars.

Dozens of spongy moth egg masses on a tree trunk. Photo credit: Karla Salp, Washington State Dept. Agriculture via Bugwood.



These small caterpillars cause a trivial amount of damage at first but gradually become larger, hungrier, and more damaging over time. Keep an eye out for activity. People who are inundated with caterpillars can consider using sticky barrier bands and burlap barrier bands to trap them as described on the UW-Madison Extension Spongy Moth website (<https://fyi.extension.wisc.edu/spongymothinwisconsin>).

Looking at the bigger picture, Mother Nature could have held a trump card for our spongy moth situation. If we had a rainy spring, damp conditions may have encouraged the fungal disease *Entomophaga maimaiga* to kick in and crash spongy moth populations (this halted outbreaks in SE Wisconsin in 2004 and 2010). However, as we experienced another dry season, spongy moth populations likely build further.

*Do you have an area of expertise that you'd like to share with other WPCA members? Write an article for our next issue of the Pest Dispatch!*

*We're looking for education, not self-promotion. Length can vary. The deadline for our next issue is May 15th. Contact [dana@barefoot-marketing.com](mailto:dana@barefoot-marketing.com).*



# PLANT POLLEN MAY BE IMPORTANT FOOD SOURCE FOR SOME MOSQUITOES IN U.S.

By Paige Embry

Food makes the mosquito. Young (larval) mosquitoes need both enough food and the right amounts of carbohydrates, proteins, amino acids, and fats to grow into adults, and some food provides what they need better than others. Although most of the 3,500 or so species of mosquitoes aren't a problem for humans, figuring out what foods help the problematic ones reach adulthood is an important scientific pursuit.

A study published earlier this year in the *Journal of Medical Entomology* looks at both corn and pine pollen to see if they might be a hidden source of sustenance for two important mosquitoes in the United States: the southern house mosquito (*Culex quinquefasciatus*), the vector for West Nile virus and a variety of other human pathogens, and the common malaria mosquito (*Anopheles quadrimaculatus*), the primary vector for malaria in the U.S. before it was eradicated.

Larval mosquitoes live in water but breathe air. Some must live at the surface and find their food there,



while others can dive down and use more of the water column as a potential pantry. None of the larvae can chew, so they need food small enough to take in whole. Donald Yee, Ph.D., BCE, a professor at the University of Southern Mississippi (USM) and co-author of the study, says, "If you look at a close-up of a

mosquito larva, most of them have big mustaches around their face, around their mouth. They'll whorl those in kind of a cyclical motion to create vortices in

the water that draws material to them." And then they suck it up. Where they can feed in the water column impacts what food they can bring in with their vortex-inducing "mustaches."

One potential, and often abundant, food that has received little attention is pollen. Corn is one of the most widely grown crops in the world and produces copious amounts of pollen at certain times of the year. Similarly, pine trees grow widely and produce large quantities of pollen. Corn pollen has been shown to be a viable food source for the two



*Anopheles* species in Africa that are the primary vectors of malaria, so Yee's student Taka Nah Jelah decided to investigate whether pollen was a potential food source for important U.S. mosquitoes for her senior thesis. Taka is from Cameroon and says that, as someone who grew up in a malaria-stricken country, it

was important to her that she had "the opportunity to do research to add to the literature that could have potential importance in the control of mosquitoes."

For the experiment, each mosquito species was given one of three diets: lactalbumin (an artificial diet used in mosquito rearing), pine pollen, or corn pollen. For each pollen type, the mosquito larvae received either low, medium, or high levels of pollen with a bit of strained ditch water to get the microbial life going. They looked at levels and stable isotopes of carbon and nitrogen (key nutrients) in both the pollen and the larvae. Researchers wanted to see how the diets affected development time, body mass, and survival.



*An. quadrimaculatus* did poorly on both pollen diets, with 25 percent making it to adulthood on corn pollen and a meager 3 percent on pine. These results differed from what had been found for *An. quadrimaculatus*' African cousins. One reason for the difference may lie in where in the water column the *Anopheles* species feed. The U.S. species lives and feeds only at the surface. If the food sinks, it is lost to them. And indeed, the pollen did sink in the experiment—and quickly. Both African species, however, can feed throughout the water column. It's a trait they share with *Cx. quinquefasciatus*, and the U.S. *Culex* survived well on both pollen types. Survival rates were high (approximately 69 percent) for all levels of the corn pollen diet, and they also did well on the medium and high levels of the pine pollen diet.

The authors say that the results of the study were unexpected—both that the *Anopheles* did poorly,

unlike the African species, and that the *Culex* did so well. Consequently, they write, the association of *Culex* larvae in habitats near corn fields warrants further research, particularly in the west north central part of the country (e.g., Iowa, Kansas, Minnesota, Nebraska, North Dakota, South Dakota). Those states grow 59 percent of U.S. corn and often have high levels of West Nile virus. Yee says that the *Culex* doing so well on corn pollen “has some real ramifications for disease because we have a lot of agriculture in the U.S. ... and we grow a lot of corn, and often times that corn is associated with the kinds of habitats where *Culex* can develop.”

*Paige Embry is a freelance science writer based in Seattle and author of “Our Native Bees: North America’s Endangered Pollinators and the Fight to Save Them.” www.paigeembry.com.*

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# DIVERSIFY WAYS TO COMMUNICATE MORE EFFECTIVELY WITH CUSTOMERS

By Cathy Landry

We all seem to know someone—a nephew, a child, a friend, a grandchild, or even ourselves—who simply will not talk on the phone. Not only do they avoid phone calls, but they also seem to have little interest in e-mail. Instead, they text to check in with a friend, book a hair appointment, or manage a doctor's appointment.

Different generations truly have very different ways of communicating, and tailoring your customer service and your marketing based on a customer's preferred means of contact is necessary these days, two pest-control customer service experts say.

"We know our customers are changing, and that's been taking place for some time," said Bobby Jenkins, president of Austin, Texas-based ABC Home and Commercial Services. "We have our younger customers, our middle-aged customers and our older customers, and even people within those groups aren't all the same. We want to communicate in the way our specific customers want to communicate."

Jenkins added that making it easy for customers to do business with the company is one of its guiding principles. "You need to be responsive to what your customer wants," he said. "You must have multiple ways to interact in efficient and effective ways."

The shift to new ways of doing business isn't always easy, but it is necessary to keep customers happy and to grow your business, said Julie Tesh-Clark, director of marketing and communications for Pest Management Systems Inc., a family-owned pest-control company serving much of North Carolina. The company, which goes by the initials PMI, recently implemented a new software system to help it better determine its customers' contact desires, and make it easier to seamlessly use those preferences to communicate with those clients.

"We know our customers have a choice when it comes to their pest-control company," said Tesh-

Clark, who also handles PMI's customer care and community outreach. "And if they want to communicate differently—and you are hearing it again and again—change is necessary." She acknowledged that many of the company's 70-plus employees were skeptical to accommodate these new realities, "but we knew that we needed to do this to stay competitive."

The good news, Jenkins said, is that software and programs to meet customer needs are generally available off the shelf, requiring just a little customization.

PMI saw the trend toward texting, and three years ago began looking at options for software that can help it meet customer needs. "It was clear that services we rely on every day—whether it's our veterinarians or hair salons—communicate with us through text. And many people really seem to like it better and find it more convenient," said Tesh-Clark, who acknowledged that she personally has embraced the trend wholeheartedly. PMI wanted to give its customers the same convenience, she said.

"A small segment of our customer base still doesn't even want an email on file. They don't text. They want us to call them to remind them of their appointment and send a paper bill," she said. "But another segment—which is growing every day—is high tech. They want to text almost exclusively to communicate, and they also want things like auto-pay and paperless billing."

*Excerpted from Pestword Magazine. Read the full article at <https://bit.ly/PMPcommunication>*



# WPCA AND THE INDUSTRY BULLETIN BOARD



The WPCA is seeking Master Techs who would like to serve on a panel discussion at our 2024 PestCon, February 13 & 14 in Wisconsin Dells.

The topic this year has a working title of “weird things we have seen” and we look forward to sharing some great stories! Panelists will receive free registration to the conference as a thank you for their time and expertise.

To nominate a colleague or yourself for consideration, please contact WPCA marketing specialist Dana Robb at [dana@barefoot-marketing.com](mailto:dana@barefoot-marketing.com).

If you have a product that is integral to your business, but you don't see the company advertising in our newsletter, please let your rep know that they should be!

Encourage them to contact WPCA marketing specialist Dana Robb at [dana@barefoot-marketing.com](mailto:dana@barefoot-marketing.com) or ask Dana to reach out to them directly.



Central Life Sciences welcomes **Tony Hughes, Ph.D.** as a technical services entomologist. Formerly, Dr. Hughes had a 22-year career with the US Navy, where his most recent assignment was with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention in Atlanta, working under the US President's Malaria Initiative program and serving as technical lead for entomology in Liberia, Rwanda, and Sierra Leone.



Congratulations to **Peggy Baelan**, customer service manager with Batzner Pest Control, who was selected as a recipient of the 2023 NPMA Impact Awards for Women in Pest Management.

The Impact Awards, awarded for the first time in 2022, honor and celebrate exceptional women at all levels within the pest management industry, in any role, including management, technical/service, sales, or office staff. Recipients were honored during NPMA's Women's Forum, May 9-11 in Charleston, SC.



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## THE PEST DISPATCH

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[dana@barefoot-marketing.com](mailto:dana@barefoot-marketing.com)

## WPCOA OFFICERS:

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**Matt Lang**, Belle City Pest Solutions LLC  
[bellecitypestsolutions@gmail.com](mailto:bellecitypestsolutions@gmail.com)

### Vice President

**Jerry Lohr**, Batzner Pest Control  
[jerryl@batzner.com](mailto:jerryl@batzner.com)

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