



# PMP

# Reporter

Spring 2024

## Flight of the Swarmers

by David Moore, BCE  
Dodson Bros. Exterminating Co.

It's that time of year again. Things are flying and business is starting to get busy. Now is the time that people start calling about flying insects. "Is this a termite?", is a question I have had about every day for the past week. Termite swarms have not been very prevalent for a while, but it is always good to review termite swarmers, especially this time of year, to make sure your team is focused on what to look for.

Termite swarmers, also known as alates, are winged reproductive termites that leave their colony in large numbers to establish new colonies. These swarmers typically emerge during the springtime when conditions are favorable, such as after a rainstorm or when temperatures rise. Their emergence is often triggered by factors like temperature, humidity, and sometimes even light.

Termite swarmers are often mistaken for flying ants due to their similar appearance. However, there are some key differences between the two. Termite



swarmers have straight antennae, a broad waist, and two pairs of wings that are equal in size. In contrast, flying ants have elbowed antennae, a narrow waist, and two pairs of wings that are unequal in size.

Once termite swarmers emerge from their colony, they engage in a mating flight. During this flight, they pair up and mate, after which they shed their wings and begin searching for a suitable location to start a new colony. This process is crucial for the expansion of termite colonies and can be a cause for concern for homeowners, as it may indicate the presence of a nearby termite infestation.

Termite swarmers can typically be found in areas where there is an existing termite colony nearby. They emerge from their colonies in large numbers during specific times of the year, often

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## VPMA Vision & Mission

The leadership of the Virginia Pest Management Association works to fulfill the vision of the organization and to promote the values of our mission statement to our members and industry stewards.

**VISION STATEMENT** - The vision of the Virginia Pest Management Association is to be recognized by the public and the pest industry as the premier resource for supporting the pest management profession.

**MISSION STATEMENT** - The mission of the Virginia Pest Management Association is to promote ethical and environmentally responsible pest management practices among our members through education, coalition and professionalism to safely protect the general public.

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# Vice President's Message: Shannon Harlow-Ellis

## *Recognizing Excellence: Andrea Coron Receives PWIPM Impact Award*



In a testament to her outstanding contributions to the pest management industry, Andrea Coron, Executive Director of the Virginia Pest Management Association (VPMA), has been honored with the Professional Women in Pest Management Impact Award by the National Pest Management Association (NPMA). This prestigious accolade celebrates Andrea's remarkable dedication and achievements over her career spanning three decades.

The NPMA's Impact Awards are designed to recognize and celebrate exceptional women across all levels and roles within the pest management industry. From management to technical/service, sales, and office staff, women making significant contributions in any function at pest control companies or industry suppliers are eligible for consideration. Andrea's recognition underscores her consistent leadership and influence in propelling the industry forward.

When VPMA Board Member, Rahsan Mitchell learned of the open nominations for the Impact Award, he immediately thought of Andrea and her work with the VPMA, and decided that he would complete a nomination for Andrea highlighting her contributions to the industry. And I could not have agreed more with his initiative. I have known and worked with Andrea for six years. I was in the inaugural LEAP class in Nov. 2018 where I had the pleasure of really getting to know Andrea. She is an avid ambassador for VPMA and the Pest Control Industry, always fostering a culture of professionalism, inclusivity, and continuous improvement.

Andrea's journey in pest management has been marked by continuous growth and dedication to supporting the business and science of pest control in Virginia. As VPMA's Executive Director for 30 years, she has been an integral part of the development and implementation of each of VPMA's educational programs. VPMA's commitment to educating the Industry has flourished under her leadership. While recertification is always key to the development of technical offerings, all of VPMA's programs also aim to build professionalism within the Industry.

From the straight recertification credits offered during the Spring Webinars, to the certification earned at the WDI Inspector Program, and the Master Technician Designation earned through the Master Technician Series, as well as the support provided during the Jeffrey M. Johnson memorial ACE Prep Course, the technical training opportunities allow technicians to improve their problem-solving skills, gain additional credentials and grow their career in pest management.

The development of the LEAP program, the Business Management Day of the State Technical Meeting and the growth of the STM Admin Conference have highlighted the importance of providing more than just technical training. Andrea's guidance through the implementation of these important programs has played a pivotal role in shaping the landscape of pest management education not only within Virginia but also on a national scale.



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Beyond her role at VPMA, Andrea also works with the Maryland State Pest Control Association, Pi Chi Omega (the national pest control fraternity), the United Producers Formulators and Distributors Association and the Virginia Wildlife Damage Management Association. In her work with all of these associations, she has learned from, and grown with, so many encouraging women in pest management. Andrea aims to likewise provide leadership and encouragement to other women in pest management.

The NPMA's decision to honor Andrea with the Professional Women in Pest Management Impact Award reflects her profound impact and influence within the industry. Nominations for this esteemed award were open to individuals from NPMA member companies as well as non-members, encouraging recognition of deserving professionals from all corners of the industry.

Andrea's selection as a recipient underscores the merit of her contributions and the profound respect she commands among her peers.

As the recipient of this prestigious award, Andrea Coron



VPMA Executive Director Andrea Coron

joins a distinguished cohort of women who have left an indelible mark on the pest management industry. Her recognition comes at a time when the industry celebrates diversity, inclusion, and the invaluable contributions of women in driving innovation and excellence. Andrea's leadership, dedication, and passion serve as an inspiration to all who aspire to make a lasting impact in the field of pest management.

As we celebrate Andrea's well-deserved recognition, we also recognize the countless women who contribute their talents, expertise, and passion to advancing the pest management industry. Their collective efforts shape the future of pest management, driving innovation, sustainability, and excellence. Andrea Coron's receipt of the Professional Women in Pest Management Impact Award is not only a celebration of her individual achievements but also a testament to the limitless potential of women in shaping the future of our industry.

Congratulations, Andrea Coron, on this well-deserved honor. Your leadership, dedication, and impact serve as a beacon of inspiration to us all.



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## Flight of the Swarmers *continued from p. 1.*

in the spring when conditions are right for mating and establishing new colonies. Here are some common places where you might find termite swarmers:

- Near light sources: Termite swarmers are attracted to light, so you may find them near windows, doors, or light fixtures, especially during their mating flights.
- Around exterior walls: Termites may emerge from cracks or crevices in the exterior walls of buildings, particularly around areas where wood contacts soil or where there is moisture damage.
- In basements or crawl spaces: Termite swarmers may also be found in basements or crawl spaces, especially if these areas have moisture issues or direct access to the soil.
- Around tree stumps or woodpiles: If there are decaying wood sources nearby, such as tree stumps, woodpiles, or mulch beds, you might find termite swarmers congregating around these areas.



## Predicting Termite Swarms

Termite swarm season mostly occurs from February to June for the native *Reticulitermes* species including the damaging Eastern Subterranean Termite with southern areas occurring earliest. Swarms usually happen on a warm spring day after some precipitation. A study was conducted by Furman and Gold (2002) in Texas that looked at predicting swarming based on environmental cues including heat units (also called Degree days) and precipitation. They found that a minimum of 602 heat units accumulated after Dec 21 was required before swarming occurred the following spring and the majority of swarms occurred after accumulations between 640 – 680 heat units within 3 days of an initial rainfall event.

Heat units for termites were calculated above a base temperature of 40 C = approximately 390 F which is the temperature for termites where growth is pretty much halted. The formula used to calculate the daily heat units is the (maximum temperature (°C) plus the minimum temperature (°C) divided by 2 minus the base temperature (4°C). Therefore, if you can calculate the heat units based on daily temperatures you may be able to predict when swarming will take place shortly after a rain event in a given area based on this Texas study.

*Provided by Corteva. Furman B. D., Gold, R. E. 2002. Prediction of spring subterranean termite swarms in Texas with relation to temperature and precipitation, pp: 303–318. In Jones, S. C., Zhai, J., Robinson, W. H.(eds.), Proceedings of the 4th International Conference on Urban Pests, 7–10 July 2002, Charleston, SC. Pocahontas Press, Inc. Blacksburg, VA.*

- Near moisture sources: Termites require moisture to survive, so they are often found near sources of water, such as leaky pipes, faucets, or areas with poor drainage.
- In outdoor structures: Termite swarmers may emerge from outdoor structures such as wooden fences, decks, or sheds, especially if these structures are in close proximity to the main termite colony.

Many clients panic when they see any flying insect because they think they are automatically termites. Many times they are ant alates. But if they are termites, you need to work with your client to calm them down and explain that any treatment you perform should eliminate the colony. Explaining to them that the swarmers do not cause any damage and that termite colonies are typically slow at causing damage is also something that we should review with the client.

Its not fun to deliver this news to a client, but you do need to be candid about where you find them and what your plan is for elimination. Finally, just because you found swarmers does not mean you are done inspecting. You still need to perform a full inspection to establish if there is an active infestation anyplace and this allows you to note any damage and/or any structural issues that could be contributing to the issue. If you don't, you might open yourself up to some liability that could have been avoidable.



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# Dr. Eric Smith is Remembered by the Industry

It is with profound sorrow that we commemorate the life of Dr. Eric Smith, known as a passionate entomologist and consummate teacher. Eric passed away last week at the age of 80. Eric served as Senior Entomologist at Dodson Pest Control in Lynchburg, VA for 24 years until his retirement in 2013.

Perhaps best known nationally for being the principal author of the NPMA Field Guide to Structural Pests, in Virginia – where he spent the majority of his professional career, he was the face of pest control training for many years. In addition to his responsibilities teaching technicians at Dodson, Eric was actively involved in the education of the Pest Management Industry from 1991 – 2019 serving on the Copesan and the NPMA Technical Committees, and the Virginia and North Carolina state association Education Committees.

Eric was recognized by the Virginia Pest Management Association (VPMA) as the recipient of the 2006 Lifetime Industry Stewardship Award. He gained this accolade due to his commitment to translating the science of pest control into understandable and actionable terms for technicians, customers and the Industry as a whole.

Eric was the founding Curriculum Coordinator of the VPMA Master Technician Series started in 2001 after a fund-raising campaign that provided for the purchase of 20 microscopes. Eric was so proud of the creation of this educational series – still available at 4 workshops per year – that enables technicians to learn in a laboratory-like setting. Teaching this series enabled Eric to share his love of insects, especially from the taxonomic



viewpoint. After a morning spent identifying insects under the microscope, participants were then led through problem-solving activities to identify inspection and treatment methodologies that worked.

He also contributed his teaching talents to the VPMA Fumigation Workshop, the VPMA General Pest Recertification Workshop and the VPMA State Technical Meeting.

Andrea Coron, Executive Director of Pi Chi Omega, shared these memories, “Eric was one of the first people I met in the industry in 1994, when I began working with the Virginia Pest Management Association. He was always happy to answer my many questions about pest management in the early days – enabling me to grow as a leader in the Industry. Fast forward more than 25 years, I can honestly say he was a trusted training partner and a valued friend. He will be fondly remembered with much respect.”

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Pictured: Frank and Phillis MacDonald, Select Insurance Agency



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# Invitation to join VA PWIPM for a Happy Hour

To: Women in all aspects of the Pest Management Industry

Subject: Virginia Professional Women in Pest Management

Content: *Please forward this invitation to any women in your network who might be interested in joining!*

The members of your local Professional Women in Pest Management (PWIPM) network extend a cordial invitation to you to join us as we support women in the pest management industry by attracting, developing, and supporting women in the pest management industry through educational programs, resources, and peer networking. Membership is free to any woman working in the pest control industry.



The graphic features a purple and blue background with a grid pattern. On the left, there is a white dragonfly logo on a purple square, with the text 'VIRGINIA PROFESSIONAL WOMEN IN PEST MANAGEMENT' below it. To the right, the text 'Spring PWIPM Happy Hour' is written in large, bold letters. Below this, there is a calendar icon, the date 'May 15', and the time '04:00 - 05:00 PM'. A pink button says 'Register here!'. At the bottom, the website 'WWW.VPMAONLINE.COM' and phone number '540-374-9200' are listed.

Interested? Contact [pwipm@pestworld.org](mailto:pwipm@pestworld.org). You'll be added to the list we use to keep in touch.

Those of us who have been with PWIPM for some time have found these activities and friendships to be some of the most rewarding we have ever experienced. We are confident that you, too, will enjoy this affiliation. And we welcome the opportunity to get to know you and include you in our upcoming activities.

Currently, we are hosting a virtual "Happy Hour" event on May 15th, 2024, at 4pm. Please join us by registering here: <https://forms.office.com/r/eU4zFvxzNi>

Sincerely,  
Shannon Harlow-Ellis, ACE  
Andrea Coron, Executive Director VPMA

# Attack the Perimeter

by Richard D. Kramer, BCE  
Kramer Pest Management and Consulting, LLC  
Adapted from an article originally published in  
PCT May 2006.

In my opinion, unless you live in the deep south where there is only one season, spring is the most spectacular season of the year in our area. It is the season when the sleeping giant, nature, awakens, and many animals we label as pests renew their cycle of life and the demands for our services increase exponentially.

It is important to recognize that most of the pest problems confronting our customers arise from the exterior of the structure and the earlier we attack the perimeter the easier it is to keep the problems in check. As pest populations increase it becomes more difficult to manage them at acceptable levels because they expand their niches, and their sheer numbers can become an obstacle.

Hodge (1911) gives one of the most dramatic examples of an insect's (house fly's) capacity to

populate. Based on the capacity of a single fly to lay 120-150 eggs per batch and a minimum of six batches at 3-4 day intervals he concludes: "A pair of flies beginning operations in April may be progenitors, if all were to live, of 191,010,000,000,000,000,000 (191 quintillion 10 quadrillion) flies in August. Allowing one-eighth of a cubic inch per fly, this number would cover the earth forty-seven feet deep."

While we are unlikely to encounter these extreme pest populations, insect populations do have the ability to explode. Because insects are greatly affected by environmental conditions, they have a relatively short period of time to exploit the resources the environment and season have to offer. Once these change and/or are depleted, pests seek out more consistent human



environments readily available to them. The keys to offsetting pest problems are to act early, alter their environment, deprive them of the human environment, and attack the perimeter before they have a chance to multiply and enter structures.

It is much easier to manage insect populations as they begin to expand in the spring, as opposed to waiting until their numbers reach the carrying



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capacity of the environment. You and your customers can have a direct impact on the carrying capacity of the environment.

Foundation landscape plantings are probably the greatest attractant for pest insects because they typically offer everything the expanding population needs:

- Food - many plants offer a wealth of food to insects, e.g., pollen, nectar, sap, and foliage. One of the major sources of food on these plants is provided by non-structure invading landscape pests that not only serve as a major food source (protein and fats) for predatory pests, such as ants but are also food processors converting plant juices into honeydew (a sugary carbohydrate excretion) that can also serve as a substrate for mold – powdery mildew, another food resource.
- Moisture – landscape plants around the foundation do not produce water but cause it to be liberally applied next to the foundation - simply because property owners do not want to see expensive landscape plants die from lack of moisture. Furthermore to retain more water, mulch or other moisture-conserving medium is liberally applied around the foundation and the base of the plants – in some cases creating an impervious interface between the surface and the soil. Landscape plants conserve moisture and create a cool environment by the shade that they offer.
- Harborage – as previously mentioned ground covers and plants themselves offer harborage. But more importantly hardscape items, e.g., rocks, statuary, furniture, downspout splash blocks, landscape timbers, etc., offer a wide array of harborage to insect pests.

You can't expect your customers to completely eliminate landscaping from the perimeter of their structures. However, you can advise them on techniques to appropriately manage this environment, thereby minimizing pest problems by stressing the population. For instance, thinning the mulch layer, reducing water applications, allowing air to circulate under hardscape items, and replacing landscape timbers and other wood with synthetic materials.



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The selection of plant material around the perimeter can be a factor in reducing pest pressure around the perimeter. Using plants that are insect and disease-resistant can have a positive impact. By minimizing aphids, scale, whiteflies, and other honeydew producing insects and the associated powdery mildew, the perimeter will be much less attractive to perimeter pests. In cases where these attractive conditions exist washing the plants periodically throughout the growing season will remove much of the sugary secretions produced by these insects.

Ants are one of the best examples of insects that take full advantage of what nature, and the human habitat described above, have to offer. They have a distinct advantage over many other groups of insects in that they are social insects that work together for the betterment of the whole. In part, this works to their advantage, but there are elements of their behavior that can also work against them.

One of the keys to the success of ants is their ability to find and exploit resources using phero-

mones. Once a food and/or water source is located the line forms and may extend hundreds of feet ferrying supplies back to the colony. The downside for the ants is that liquid and granular baits, as well as non-repellent insecticides, can also be transported unknowingly back to the nest, resulting in colony destruction.

Insect habits and behavior are significantly affected by the time of year and the availability of nutrients. You must be aware of these changes and how they affect the products you use and the method of application you apply. For instance, liquid and granular baits can be very effective against foraging insects and surface feeders. Non-repellent insecticides may be equally effective against these types of insects, in addition to those that spend most of their time under protective layers. Products with a repellency factor can be very effective on the perimeter in keeping pests away from the foundation.

The product formulation is another important factor to consider. Granules applied to the soil can provide long-term control, but in the ab-

sence of water they are relatively ineffective. Liquid applications are less durable but provide immediate results, particularly on direct contact.

All too often our initial inclination is to go after most pests from inside the structure. Undoubtedly this provides some degree of success, e.g., it kills some pests, but rarely does it solve the problem. Attacking the perimeter provides a solution to what you and your customer want - a longer-term solution to their pest problem.

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Spring is here and some businesses may be starting to get calls about termite swarms. Whether the swarms are seen inside a structure or nearby the structure, they prompt calls from homeowners seeking inspections. As businesses start receiving those swarm calls, they should serve as a reminder to inspect your pesticide business license and to have your staff inspect their certification cards.

Applicators should look for the expiration date of their certificates to see when it expires and if they need to attend a recertification course. Applicators will either be on an even year or an odd year renewal and recertification cycle. In March 2022, the regulations were revised so that no fees are required for pesticide applicator renewals; if the applicator has obtained sufficient recertification credit, the certification will automatically renew. Applicators whose certificate expires on June 30, 2024, need to have recertification credit for each category through June 30, 2026, or beyond (i.e. 2028) to renew.

Failure to earn recertification credit by the expiration date on the applicator's certificate will result in expiration of their certification. Applicators are provided 60 days after the expiration date to complete the training and avoid retesting, however the Pesticide Control Act requires that the applicator must retest if training is not completed within that 60-day period. The 60-day "grace" period for applicators whose certificates expire on June 30, 2024, is August 29, 2024.

**Recertification Course Opportunities Will Begin to Dwindle** – If you do not have the required recertification credits and your certificate is expiring June 30, 2024, you need to complete the training soon as these recertification courses are dwindling. For a list of approved recertification courses visit <https://www.vdacs.virginia.gov/pdf/recertcourses.pdf>.

Applicators can monitor their recertification status on the Pesticides page of the Virginia De-

partment of Agriculture and Consumer Services (VDACS) website. The

Office of Pesticide Services posts a list (spreadsheet) of all currently Certified Commercial Applicators and Registered Technicians. The list can be viewed at: <https://online.vdacs.virginia.gov/Common/CertifiedCommercialApplicatorsReport>.

As your employees inspect their certificates, have them ensure the employer's name, employer business license number and mailing address are current. If an applicator has changed employers or if the business mailing address has changed since the certificate was issued, and they have not notified the Office of Pesticide Services, please submit an [Applicator Change of Information](#) form as soon as possible. The form will be used to update the applicator's contact information as well as employer information. The Office of Pesticide Services plans to begin mailing renewed certificates in June, so it is important to have the information up to date so the renewed certificates will reach the applicator instead of being returned by the United States Postal Service (USPS).

Also remember that the pesticide business license must be current for a pesticide business to operate. Businesses had until March 31, 2024, to submit their business license renewal applications to avoid late fees. If your business license expired on March 31, 2024, and you have not yet submitted the renewal application, please do so as soon as possible. Remember to include a copy of your Certificate of Insurance to ensure our records are up to date as well.

For the most current information regarding pesticide business licensing and applicator certification, please visit <https://www.vdacs.virginia.gov/pesticides.shtml>. If you have any questions, please contact the Office of Pesticide Services as [opsclrt.vdacs@vdacs.virginia.gov](mailto:opsclrt.vdacs@vdacs.virginia.gov) or call at (804) 786-3798.



# How to Make your CSRs the Best They Can Be

by Seth Garber  
Founder and CEO, Pest Daily

When you work in a service-oriented industry like pest or wildlife control, the quality of the customer experience is everything. If you're able to solve someone's ant problem while providing them with personalized, friendly service, they're probably going to stick with you for life. Plus, there's a good chance they'll sing your praises to their friends and family as well. That's always a great thing, right?

But before you have the opportunity to wow customers with your knowledge and expertise, they have to hire you first - and that's where your customer service representatives come in. CSRs play an integral role in creating a positive initial impression of your company and showing

your prospects why you're the perfect choice for them.

"Your CSRs are quite literally the face - and the voice - of your organization," said Seth Garber, a leading industry consultant and founder of the e-learning platform Pest Daily. "By training them on the real-life situations they'll be dealing with, they'll be prepared to handle anything that comes their way. And that's ultimately what's going to make your company stand out, especially for the customers who need your help the most."

If you're looking to empower your CSRs and get them excited about delivering outstanding service every time, here are five of Garber's recommendations:

**1. Provide comprehensive, ongoing education and training:** Your CSRs don't have to become subject matter experts on every insect under the

sun but it's important that they have a basic understanding of common household pests, their behaviors and any telltale signs of infestations. Additionally, they should have a solid grasp on the services your company provides, what each treatment entails and how long they can expect them to take. Building this level of knowledge doesn't happen overnight, though, and because industry standards and company procedures can change frequently, Garber recommends doing regular training sessions to keep your CSRs updated and informed -



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it's something that your customers will definitely notice and appreciate! "When someone calls in and your CSRs can immediately demonstrate that they understand the problem and how to solve it, that's huge," Garber said. "It builds a lot of trust in your company and makes prospective customers feel confident that you can take care of them."

**2. Teach active listening skills:** When people reach out to a pest control company for help, they're probably feeling pretty anxious and worried about what's going on at their home. They may even feel embarrassed that they have a pest issue in the first place! That's why Garber stresses the importance of teaching your CSRs to be compassionate, active listeners. For example, when they're on a call, they should be paying full attention to what the customer is saying, validating her concerns, showing empathy, clarifying information, asking questions and reassuring her that she's come to the right place. "When someone is in the middle of something that's super stressful, the last thing they need is to be treated like a number," Garber said. "Simply making that person feel heard and understood can go a long way in turning a negative situation into a positive experience."

**3. Develop your team's problem-solving abilities:** Scenario training can be one of the most valuable teaching tools out there and can be beneficial for CSRs at every stage of their careers. Garber suggests creating a list of the most common situations that your CSRs will face, having them roleplay how they would address them and then providing constructive feedback. It's also a good idea to have CSRs share success stories of how they handled a particularly tricky situation and ended up with a positive outcome. "Hearing those types of stories can be incredibly educational and motivating for the entire team," Garber said. Additionally, he advises empowering your CSRs to make small decisions on behalf of the company to solve customer issues more efficiently. By focusing on the ongoing development of these valuable skills, you'll build the con-

fidence of your team members and make them more effective in their customer interactions. It's a win-win!

**4. Encourage the use of technology:** Any time your CSRs speak to customers, make sure they're taking notes in your CRM. That way, customers won't have to re-explain their situation every time they call and it can allow the CSR to engage with them on a more personal level. Garber also recommends creating a shared drive to compile information that CSRs can refer to including FAQs, product sheets and guides to common pests. Putting the information your CSRs need in one central location can prevent them from having to scramble to find it when they're on the phone with a customer. That's a surefire way to make that person second guess your ability to solve their problem and you definitely don't want that to happen.

**5. Implement a follow-up strategy:** After every service is completed, Garber recommends having your CSRs follow up to make sure the customer is satisfied and address any additional concerns that may exist. A follow-up call also gives you the opportunity to solicit feedback and find out if there are any ways to improve the customer experience. Knowledge is power and the more you understand what your customers want, the better off you'll be in the long run.

The bottom line: Developing your CSR team is an ongoing process and it can take time and patience. However, by investing in your people and supporting their professional growth through training and role playing exercises, they'll gain confidence in themselves and become an invaluable asset to your company and your customers. What more could you ask for?

*Seth Garber, the founder and CEO of Pest Daily, has been an active member of the pest control community since 2008. A former owner/operator himself, Garber is now considered to be the top consultant in the industry and has developed unique, innovative methodologies to help pest control companies grow strategically and intentionally. To learn more, visit [www.pestdaily.com](http://www.pestdaily.com).*

# VPMA Helps Postpone Bill to Undermine Pesticide Pre-Emption

*By Ron Gaskill, Mosquito Joe of the National Capitol Region, VPMA Board Member and Chair of the Legislative and Regulatory Committee*

The VPMA joined with the National Pest Management Association and other trade associations in Richmond to defeat HB922, a bill that would allow homeowners associations to ban pesticides in the community. Introduced in the Virginia House of Delegates by Rep. Irene Shin (D-Herndon), the bill's intent was clear:

“The association may prohibit or restrict the use of pesticides in or upon the common areas and may establish reasonable restrictions on the use of pesticides within the common interest community that might reasonably affect any lot or common area.”

The bill was referred to the Committee on General Laws, and further to the Housing and Consumer Protection Subcommittee, which held a hearing on the bill on January 25, 2024.

The VPMA, the NPMA, the Virginia Agribusiness Council, the Virginia Farm Bureau, and others submitted comments in opposition to the bill, citing Virginia's current, most favorable

system of approving the use of pesticides in the Commonwealth solely by the Virginia Dept. of Agriculture and Consumer Services. The groups further suggested that community homeowner's

associations already have the ability to determine what pesticides may be used on community property by working with their pest control operator to make that determination. A change in law is not necessary to allow that, especially one that undermines a good system of pesticide approval that has worked well.

The subcommittee elected to not act on the bill and hold it over to the 2025 legislative session, where it could be entertained again. The VPMA statement is below:



STATEMENT OF THE VIRGINIA PEST MANAGEMENT ASSOCIATION  
To the  
HOUSING AND CONSUMER PROTECTION COMMITTEE  
Of the  
VIRGINIA HOUSE OF DELEGATES COMMITTEE ON GENERAL LAWS  
Regarding  
HOUSE BILL NO. 922

The Virginia Pest Management Association (VPMA) appreciates the opportunity to comment on House Bill 922, relating to common interest communities; pesticides; prohibition on use. More than 300 pest management professionals (PMPs) from across the Commonwealth are members of the VPMA, as are the manufacturers and distributors of the products used by PMPs to protect the

public health and welfare of Virginians from the diseases, the property damage, and the nuisances of many kinds of pestilence.

The VPMA is strongly opposed to HB922 because it usurps the very robust process of approving, or not, the use of pesticides by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) in partnership with the Virginia Dept. of Agriculture and Consumer Services (VDACS), pursuant to federal and state statutes including, but not limited to, the Federal Insecticide, Fungicide, and Rodenticide Act, and the Virginia Pesticide Control Act. Delegating any form of approval on the use of pesticides to a lower level of government or, even worse, to a non-governmental entity, most of which do not have the highly technical scientific knowledge that is required to understand how pesticides function, and their impact on the environment, is extremely bad public policy, particularly when such products are an essential key to the protection of the public from diseases such as Lyme's Disease, West Nile Virus, Zika, and many, many others.

Homeowner's associations and other common interest bodies already have, under existing statute, the ability to determine what pesticides, if any, may be used on common properties of their communities. They do so by simply being a consumer, or not, of pest management services and the products used therein. The need to create bad public policy for no effective gain to the intended beneficiary of this legislation, is well overridden by the very positive influence of existing law to the protection of both human health and the environment. It can be argued in fact, that exposing homeowner's associations to the additional liability from banning any pesticide, if such action were to be authorized, would make bad public policy even worse for the community.

Thank you again for the opportunity to present the views of the VPMA on this important issue. We urge the Committee to NOT forward HB922 for further consideration.



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# CVPMA Travelled Back to the Lab

by *Rahsan J. Mitchell*  
*CVPMA President/VPMA National Liaison*  
*"Get Involved, Get Active, and Grow"*

Members of the CVPMA traveled "Back to the Lab" - Virginia Tech's campus and the Dodson Urban Pest Management Lab in Blacksburg, VA, where they were met by Dr. Dinni Miller and Morgan Wilson, PhD candidate. As an aside, The Dodson Urban Pest Management Laboratory (DUPML) is a facility dedicated to the research of urban arthropod pests in structures and the landscape. The laboratory was established in 1990 through funds donated by members of the Virginia Pest Management Association. The mission of the laboratory is to conduct research and provide the most innovative pest management information to the Virginia Cooperative Extension Service,

pest management professionals, and the public. The DUPML is 2,950 square foot building housing three research laboratories (one lab is dedicated to pesticide application tests), two insect rearing areas, and staff office space.

The day started with some light refreshments and a tour of the laboratory and an immediate hands-on experience with the German cockroach and Bed bug assays setup. From there the group moved on to begin termite biology, behavior and identification under the microscope. Seeing the termites up close and personal under the microscope was one of the many eye-opening experiences during the visit, which was very different from seeing the live insects themselves. This portion of the visit was so interesting that the group extended the time allotted for termites and shortened the lunch period.

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*Pictured from Left to Right: (Josh Lush, Jordan Masterson, Dr. Dini Miller, Rahsan Mitchell, Jason Eddy, Sharocka Montgomery  
Photo credit: Morgan Wilson*

It was a short walk across the street to grab lunch, only to return to the lab and eat with the insects! (That was interesting). After lunch, the group assisted Dr. Miller and Morgan with the data collection of the German cockroach assay. This illustrated, in real time, MGK products vs BASF and Syngenta products. Let's just say seeing is believing and the entire group left that portion of the visit with a renewed faith in cockroach gel baits.

As the visit drew to a close, the group ended with our infamous friends, the Bed bugs. At this juncture, they were testing out the efficacy of

several manufactured products as well as introducing a new product called Slick Barrier. In the opinion of this author, while effective, using Slick Barrier for bed bugs can be challenging. Nonetheless, he does think it is useful as an alternative tool to offer current and potential customers if you're experiencing call backs! You be the judge! For those in attendance, it was great to see you Back-to-the-lab at Virginia Tech.

Thank you for your enthusiastic participation! We couldn't have had such an awesome experience without you. Thank you for joining us and stay tuned!



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