

The Asian Cockroach: a Unique Pest Challenge

By David Moore, II, BCE, Dodson Pest Control



If it walks like a duck, swims like a duck, and quacks like a duck, then it's a...

Not everything is what it seems. Recently, I have been asked to consult on a number of cases of flying German cockroaches that are coming from outside. I know instantly that is not the case. A pest that has been growing in numbers over recent years is the Asian cockroach and you can be very easily fooled by this pest if you are not careful.

Though often mistaken for its close relative, the German cockroach, the Asian cockroach poses unique challenges in pest management due to its outdoor habitat, flying ability, and light-attracted behavior. Asian cockroaches are nearly identical in appearance to German cockroaches, which can lead to misidentification. They both look very similar in size, shape, color, and identi-

fying markers on their pronotum.

The best way to distinguish them is through behavior and habitat. Asian cockroaches are strong fliers and are often seen flying into homes through open doors and windows, especially at dusk, while German cockroaches are usually found indoors and do not fly readily. Additionally, Asian cockroaches are found outdoors in mulch, lawns, and leaf litter, while Germans are found on the interior mostly in kitchens and bathrooms.

Unlike most cockroach species, Asian cockroaches are outdoor dwellers. They prefer moist, shaded environments (mulch, leaf litter, ground cover), areas with abundant organic material, and will fly toward light sources at dusk and night (e.g., porch lights, TV screens, lamps).

This species is primarily nocturnal and becomes active in the evening. Their strong flying ability often causes them to enter homes through open windows, doors, or attic vents, especially when drawn to indoor lights.

While Asian cockroaches are less likely than German cockroaches to establish infestations indoors, they still pose concerns as a nuisance pest. In particular, they are often misidentified as German cockroaches. In large numbers, their presence can overwhelm residential yards and create an impression of an indoor infestation even if

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they're mainly coming from outside.

Control of Asian cockroaches can be broken down into some simple steps. First is outdoor habitat modification. Talk to the homeowner about reducing their mulch thickness, managing leaf litter in their yard, trimming vegetation, and trying to limit overwatering their lawns. Second is light management. Talk to them about limiting light leakage out of the structure and switching to sodium bulbs to reduce the attractiveness of the structure. Structural exclusion might be necessary as well in some situations. For chemical controls, repellent insecticides might be necessary to help prevent Asian cockroaches from entering a structure. Some insecticidal baits might help the situation but remember these are free-flying insects. Insecticidal treatments might not be as effective as preventative measures, which can be applied to the landscaping and structure for control.

The Asian cockroach presents a unique pest challenge due to its outdoor lifestyle and strong attraction to light. Though often mistaken for the German cockroach, its behavior, habitat preference, and flight capability set it apart. Effective management of Asian cockroaches relies heavily on habitat modification, light control, and preventive exclusion measures, with chemical treatments serving as a secondary strategy.

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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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President's Message: John Reid

Swinging from Spring Busy Season to Summer Sprint: VPMA is With You All the Way!



As summer reaches its peak, I want to take a moment to welcome you and share my hope that your spring was productive and your summer season is off to a successful start. This is a busy time for pest management professionals across Virginia, and I continue to be inspired by the dedication, expertise, and professionalism shown by our VPMA members in the field each day.

One thing that never slows down at VPMA is our commitment to training. We believe that education is not just a requirement—it's an investment in your people, your company, and the future of our industry. Whether you're sharpening technical skills, preparing for certification, or deepening your team's knowledge base, our training programs are built to support your business and your growth.

As we turn the corner into the second half of the year, we've got a strong slate of training opportunities that I encourage you to take advantage of:

Master Technician Series

- Rodents – September 23
- Pest Flies – September 24

These sessions offer deeper, hands-on learning for technicians who want to go beyond the basics and develop specialized skills they can apply immediately in the field. It's an excellent opportunity to build confidence and technical strength in your team.

WDI Inspector Certification – October 2

This one-day certification course reinforces accuracy, consistency, and professionalism in wood-destroying insect inspections—essential for those involved in real estate reporting and structural assessments.

VPMA State Technical Meeting (STM) – November 11–13

This year's State Technical Meeting will feature three full days of meaningful programming:

- Category 8 (Public Health) Prep and Test – November 11
- Business Day – November 12
- Technical Sessions – November 13

I want to highlight the Category 8 (Public Health) training and proctored exam taking place on Tuesday, November 11. This certification is particularly important for those who offer—or are considering offering—mosquito control services, which continues to be a growing part of our industry. VPMA is proud to offer a prep course and proctored exam on the same day, giving attendees the opportunity to walk in, prepare, and test—all in one coordinated session.

We last held this training and exam format in 2019, and it was a highly successful and well-attended event. If you or someone on your team needs Category 8 for your business—or if you

have managers who would benefit from adding it to their certification portfolio—this is a fantastic opportunity to do so in a focused and supportive environment. I highly recommend making plans now to attend.

As a business owner, I know how easy it can be to get caught up in the day-to-day. But I've also learned that the best-performing teams are those that continually invest in training and development. These educational opportunities aren't just about CEUs—they're about building a company that's more capable, more confident, and more competitive. Stronger people lead to stronger businesses, and VPMA is here to help make that possible.

We're also hard at work behind the scenes on this year's State Technical Meeting, and I'm excited about what's in store. From new speakers and expanded content to better networking and

engagement, we're building an event that will bring value to every corner of your business—whether you're in operations, sales, management, or service.

VPMA remains focused on offering the tools and resources our members need to thrive, and that means listening to your feedback and delivering training that matters. I encourage you to register for these events, bring your teams, and make development a shared priority in your organization.

Thank you for the work you do every day and thank you for your continued support of VPMA. I look forward to seeing many of you this fall at one or more of our upcoming events. Until then, stay safe, stay sharp, and keep leading the way.

Sincerely,

John Reid

President, Virginia Pest Management Association

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VPMA Education in Action: 549 PMPs Trained this Spring with Support from Dedicated Presenters and Sponsors



Dini Miller,
Ph.D.



Jared Miller



John Singletary,
ACE



Frank Meek,
BCE, PCQI, PHE



Ian Williams,
BCE, PCQI



Jamel Sandidge,
Ph. D.

VPMA’s busiest time of year is from late winter through the end of June, when we are providing specialty and recertification training for technicians throughout Virginia and surrounding states. To date in 2025, VPMA has provided training to 549 class attendees during 2 Master Tech courses in February, 3 Application Academies in March, 2 WDI Inspector Certification courses in March and June, and 3 Spring Recertification Webinars in April, May, and June.

VPMA is the trusted training partner for the pest control industry in Virginia – its our mission! 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. Education is the number one strategic vehicle we use to accomplish this mission.

There are so many factors that go into meeting our mission through education. At this time of year, when pesticide applicator certification has to be renewed, the very basic reason for these

classes is to allow PMPs to conduct the business of pest control. We understand the importance of completing recertification requirements so that technicians’ licenses remain in compliance.

However, the need for effective and environmentally responsible pest management is the overarching tenet of the education we provide. The services our industry provides—and the products and equipment we use—must be safe for pest management professionals (PMPs), customers, and the environments where we work. VPMA could not present the high-quality education that our members and the industry rely on, if it were not for all of our presenters who donate their time, knowledge, and resources to teach PMPs!

VPMA extends a very sincere Thank You to all the presenters who taught the 549 people who turned to VPMA this Spring for their training! If you see these folks, please tell them how much you appreciate their dedication to the pest management industry in Virginia!

- Michael Ivey - Syngenta
- Frank Meek, BCE, PCQI, PHE – Rollins Ento-



Jason Meyers, Ph.D.



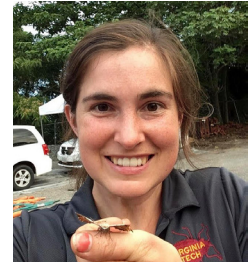
David Price, ACE



John Reid



Michael Ivey



Morgan Wilson, Ph.D.

mology

- Dini Miller, Ph.D. – Virginia Tech Entomology
- Jared Miller - Corteva
- Jason Meyers, Ph.D. – BASF
- David Price, ACE – Mosquito Joe Franchising
- John Reid – Accel Pest & Termite
- Jamel Sandidge, Ph. D. – Nisus Corp.
- John Singletary, ACE – Nisus Corp.
- Ian Williams, BCE, PCQI - Rollins Entomology
- Morgan Wilson, Ph.D. – Fox Pest Control (formerly Virginia Tech Entomology)

VDACS Pesticide Investigators:

- Mike Abston
- Hannah Bonyak
- Robert Christian
- Eric Pratt
- Susan Odom

This dedicated group from the VDACS Office of Pesticide Services made themselves available at all of our trainings this Spring. Their open demeanor and professional presentations encourage VPMA participants to ask questions and participate in compliance through education.

Michael Ivey, Territory Sales Manager with Syngenta, single-handedly moved around Virginia to present 3 **Application Academies** in March that provided free training to all VPMA members – providing practical knowledge and experience for technicians.

A trio of trainers presented the two **Master Technician Courses: Cockroaches and Blood-Feeding Arthropods** in February. Dini Miller, Ph.D., professor at Virginia Tech, is our curriculum coordinator for this specialty training. She has actively been teaching these courses for more than 23 years! She was joined by Morgan Wilson, her student at the time, and David Price, ACE, Vice President of Strategic Growth at Mosquito Joe, who contributed specialized knowledge on blood-feeding arthropods.

The **VPMA WDI Inspector Certification**

Course is taught by our dynamic duo of Johns! John Reid, Vice President at Accel Pest & Termite, and John Singletary, ACE, Northeast Regional Manager at Nisus Corp., come together three times per year to present the VPMA WDI Inspector Certification Course. This Spring, they travelled to Fredericksburg to present the course in person in March and presented a webinar in June. They will present the course in person again on October 2, 2025, in Virginia Beach.

Our last training team to be featured is the Zoom Warriors, who put together the **VPMA Spring Recert Webinars**. Teaching over Zoom is convenient, but by no means an easy task. Our Spring webinar team hit it out of the park this year, providing training to 355 people during three 5-hour webinars. Frank Meek, BCE, PCQI, PHE, and Ian Williams, BCE, PCQI, with Rollins Entomology, shared the presentation on the wildlife topic. Jared Miller, Territory Manager at Corteva, presented the latest on termites at each webinar. Jason Meyers, Ph.D., Technical Services Representative at BASF, provided the important information about mosquito control and the public health threat posed by mosquitoes. The topic of cockroaches was professionally covered by Jamel Sandidge, Ph.D., Nisus Corp's National Director of Technical Services.

VPMA Education Partners Fuel Year-Round Training Efforts

A vital part of VPMA's ability to offer high-quality educational programming throughout the year comes from the generous support of our Premier and Gold Sponsors. These dedicated partners go above and beyond, providing financial contributions that directly enhance our educational initiatives. Their investment helps VPMA deliver meaningful training opportunities, keeping pest management professionals informed, prepared, and ahead of industry trends. Our Premier and Gold Sponsors are listed on the next page. Be sure to thank them for their year-round support of VPMA's educational programs.

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Morgan Wilson, Ph.D.: From Student to PMP

The Virginia Pest Management Association is proud to share an exciting update on one of our own – Dr. Morgan Wilson. Many VPMA

members will recognize Morgan as a past recipient of the VPMA scholarship, a familiar face at the State Technical Meeting where she presented her research, and a valued contributor at Master Technician Workshops, where she offered hands-on microscope demonstrations and shared her entomological expertise.

This May, Morgan completed her Ph.D. in

Entomology at Virginia Tech, earning the well-deserved title of Dr. Wilson. The VPMA Board and staff, along with our entire membership, extend our heartfelt congratulations on this significant milestone.

Reflecting on her journey, Morgan shared, “I cannot express how proud and grateful I am for my experiences in Virginia Tech’s Department of Entomology under Dr. Dini Miller’s mentorship. I also must thank the Virginia Pest Management Association for their support throughout graduate school. I am thrilled to have begun my new role supporting the PMPs of Fox Pest Control.”

We are excited to see Morgan continue her career in the pest management industry, and we know she will make a meaningful impact. Congratulations, Dr. Wilson!

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Regulatory Update: **Pesticide Applicator Renewals & Pesticide Collection Program**



Applicator Renewal

The Virginia Department of Agriculture & Consumer Services (VDACS), Office of Pesticide Services (OPS), has begun to run renewals for applicators whose certificates were due to expire on June 30, 2025. There is currently no fee for the renewal of applicator certificates, so there are no application forms or fees to submit to the agency. Applicators' certificates will automatically renew so long as the applicator has earned sufficient recertification credit in at least one category associated with their certificate and is not associated with an expired business license.

If a commercial applicator holds multiple categories but has not earned recertification credit for each, then only those for which credit was earned and entered before the renewal will be listed on their renewed certificate. They should request an updated certificate after credits are earned in any additional categories that are not reflected on their renewed certificate. If a business license has expired, then it will need to be reinstated prior to the associated applicators' certificates being renewed.

Applicators can monitor the status of their certificate and recertification credits by checking the list posted on the VDACS website at <https://online.vdacs.virginia.gov/Common/Report/CertifiedCommercialApplicatorsReport>.

Note that applicators whose certificates are not renewed by June 30, 2025 will not be listed after that date. They would also not be listed if associated with an expired business license or if the insurance has expired for a business.

As a reminder, applicators who do not take the required recertification course or retest in lieu of taking a recertification course by August 29 of the year in which they expire, must submit an application and fee and be reexamined. Al-

though there is a 60-day window of time to meet the requirements to renew, pesticide applications cannot be made using an expired certificate until it is reinstated.

As a final note, we were not able to send out renewal reminder letters in advance of running the renewed certificates as planned. As noted above, there is no renewal application, so these do not need to be returned to us. These will be sent to ALL applicators who are due to expire even if they have met the renewal requirements since they will contain a token that the applicators can use to access their records via our online portal. Each applicator record has a profile page associated with it that would also show their expiration date, categories held and recertification dates.

If you have questions, please email: opsclrt.vdacs@vdacs.virginia.gov.

Pesticide Collection Program

Virginia's Pesticide Collection Program assists agricultural producers, licensed pesticide dealers, pest control firms, golf courses, and homeowners with the proper disposal of unwanted pesticides. The program is an effort by the Virginia Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (VDACS), with participation from Virginia Cooperative Extension and the Division of Consolidated Laboratory Service.

To administer the Pesticide Collection Program, Virginia is divided into five regions. Each year, a pesticide collection program is conducted in a different region. Once all five regions have been served, the program will start another cycle. The 2025 Pesticide Collection Program will serve counties in southeast Virginia. Collection sites are listed on the next page.

2025 Virginia Pesticide Collection Program

8/05/2025
Mosquito Control
332 Saint. Bride's Rd. E
Chesapeake, VA 23322

8/06/2025
Prince George
6380 Scott Memorial Park Rd.
Prince George, VA 23875

8/07/2025
Courthouse Convenience Center
7232 Courtland Farm Rd.
Hanover, VA 23089

8/19/2025
Nutrien Ag Solutions
18432 Wachapreague Rd.
Melfa, VA 23410

8/20/2025
Indika Farms Buying Station
12249 Shiloh Drive
Windsor, VA 23487

8/21/2025
SVCC Truck Driving School
1112 Courtland Rd.
Emporia, VA 23847

9/10/2025
Southampton County Fairgrounds
25374 New Market Rd.
Courtland, VA 23837

COLLECTION TIMES 9:00-1:00 pm
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Spring 2025

Registration Form & Transport

Registration forms are requested in advance to assist with planning. Click [here](#) to access the registration form.

The Pesticide Collection Program requires participants to transport their unwanted agricultural and commercial pesticides to a central collection site where the hazardous waste disposal contractor will package the pesticides for eventual disposal. If a participant cannot safely transport unwanted pesticides, the program may make arrangements to containerize the pesticides for transport.

Collection Dates and Locations

Information including the collection dates and locations, as well as the registration form, is available at <https://www.vdacs.virginia.gov/pesticide-collection.shtml>.

Should you have any questions or need additional information, please contact Marlene Larios, Pesticide Program Coordinator, at marlene.larios@vdacs.virginia.gov or 804-371-6561.



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Save the Date: November 12 - 13, 2025

VPMA State Technical Meeting - Omni Richmond Hotel

We are excited to announce the dates for the 20th presentation of the Virginia Pest Management Association's annual State Technical Meeting!

Mark your calendars for November 12–13, 2025, as we gather at the Omni Richmond Hotel in Richmond, Virginia, for two impactful days of learning, networking, and professional development.

This two-day conference features a full day of business management training and a full day of recertification training to help you build your business.

At the heart of the event is our Exhibit Hall – the hub of activity throughout the conference. Here, you'll connect with product manufacturers, distribution partners, and service providers who

are eager to share the latest innovations, tools, and technologies that support your success in the field.

It's also a great place to network, explore new solutions, and strengthen industry relationships.

There are two ways for you to be actively involved in shaping this year's meeting:

- [Call for Speakers](#) – Share your knowledge, insights, or fresh ideas to help build this year's agenda.
- [Help Rename the Conference](#) – We're rebranding this event to better reflect the value it brings to attendees, and your input matters!

Stay tuned for more details on sessions, speakers, and registration. We can't wait to celebrate 20 years of technical and business excellence with you in Richmond!

Book Your Hotel Stay at the Omni

Room rates of \$175 available until the room block is full. Extended stay rates available pre and post conference at same rate.

[CLICK TO BOOK](#)

Book by October 21st



STM Schedule at a Glance

November 11, 2025 - Pre-conference Events

- Cat 8 Training & Testing: 12:30 - 5:00 pm (tentative) - add this category to your VDACS certification
- VPMA Board Meeting: 11:00 - 2:00 pm
- Exhibit Hall Happy Hour: 5:00 - 6:00 pm

November 12, 2025 - Management Day - designed to equip owners, managers, and emerging leaders with the tools and insights needed to grow and strengthen their businesses. Followed by President's Reception.

November 13, 2025: Technical Day - offers a full day of focused training to help PMPs stay current, confident, and compliant in the field. Attendees can earn recertification credits while gaining valuable insights into emerging pest trends, treatment strategies, and regulatory updates.

ADVERTORIAL



More Than 4,000 Pest Management Companies Can't be Wrong

Randy Abbitt, president of family owned and operated National Exterminating Co. in Newport News, Va., has been working with Phillis at Select Insurance for more than 20 years.



“Phillis and I have a long-standing relationship. She is a wealth of knowledge and always has time to discuss how the pest control industry is doing and what direction we are going. She has been with us as we grew from a \$650,000-a-year company to now more than \$7 million annually. She has always made sure we are well protected and all our insurance needs are met to keep our company sound. The pricing has always been fair, and she and Frank are always available when I call.”

— Randy Abbitt, President
National Exterminating Co.
of Newport News

Select Insurance Agency is a family-owned and-operated business that provides insurance products specifically tailored to meet the risk management needs of the pest management industry in more than 45 states nationwide.

- General Liability
- Automobile & Fleet Coverages
- Workers' Compensation
- Umbrella
- Commercial Property
- Employment Practices Liability
- Commercial Crime
- Canine Mortality
- Mold Liability

As former pest management professionals, Select's owners understand that every pest management professional operates his or her business differently, resulting in a variety of exposures and risks. Select considers each business individually before developing a pest management insurance program and assigning a carrier.

Select Insurance Agency is a proud member of the National Pest Management Association and maintains many state and regional memberships as well.

Pictured: Frank and Phillis MacDonald, Select Insurance Agency



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Failure to Communicate

By Richard D. Kramer, Ph.D., BCE, Kramer Pest Management & Consulting
Adapted from a PCT article, February 2006

“What we’ve got here is failure to communicate.” This line from the movie *Cool Hand Luke* says it best - why some companies flourish, and others do not. In my experience, companies that struggle to survive or grow in our industry fail to communicate. There are many reasons for this, e.g., lack of technical knowledge, poor oral communication, and underutilization of technical materials. These companies attract and acquire a very small percentage of our potential customers.

Frequently, customers are not seeking professional expertise and quality service – they seek companies that will solve their pest management problem for the cheapest price. When a customer starts a conversation with the question - How much will a termite treatment for my home cost? - You can almost be certain they are shopping the price, not the service. The sadder part is that some companies will quote a price without looking - foolhardy at best.

If we look at companies that are successful in our industry, the one thing that stands out is their communication with their customers. Most customers want to employ service companies that are technically competent and convey that image through communication. For communication to be successful, it must start with the initial customer contact and continue even after the service is completed.

In my opinion, the most effective methods for improving communication are through training and the development of resource materials. Training should focus on two areas, and in this order: technical knowledge and effective oral communication, because without subject matter expertise, communication fails.

Almost 25 years ago, I decided I wanted to be an instructor in Preventive Medicine (entomology) at the US Army Academy of Health Sciences in San Antonio. I had the technical skills and education required for the assignment, but I was absolutely petrified of public speaking. The Army cured me of my fear by putting me through

a three-week course on how to be an effective instructor (speaker). The essence of the course was simple: when you speak to a customer, at a public gathering, and to your peers, be the subject matter expert. Armed with technical knowledge, communication with the public is easy.

Our industry is blessed with a plethora of technical resources that accommodate a wide range of educational backgrounds from the Service Technician’s Handbook to Mallis’s Handbook of Pest Control, PCT’s Handbook series (Stoy Hedges), and many other technical resources. PCT and PMP magazines are monthly technical resources with up-to-date information on a range of topics. However, based on circulation numbers, I know that few companies make it available to their technicians. I believe any technician who has been with a company for at least two years should have his/her own subscription provided by the company - what a small price to pay for knowledge.

Regardless of how much technical training you provide, and even when your customer service personnel and technicians are subject matter experts, they still may not be effective communicators without some help. One opportunity is to have technicians provide in-house training sessions – a great non-threatening confidence builder.

To facilitate effective communication, one of the most effective tools is what I refer to as Pest Fact Sheets, one for customers and another for customer service representatives and technicians.

The outline of the Fact Sheet is simple:

- About (Pest X) - a bullet list of identification, biology, and habits.
- What you can do to prevent (Pest X) – a bullet list of what the customer can do to help mitigate the problem.
- What your technician will do for (Pest X) (This item is normally for customer service reps and technicians.) - a bullet

list of the services the technician will provide, e.g., inspection, treatment (with product x), precautionary items, expectations, and follow-up.

- What you need to do to prepare for treatment for (Pest X) - what the customer needs to do to prepare for treatment.
- Price - This item is normally for customer service reps.

Pest Fact Sheets should be prepared for the most common pests in your area. They should detail your services and possibly indicate the types of products your company uses. A picture of the pest is always helpful - it helps the customer identify with their problem and provides them with assurances that you know what their problem is. In apartment buildings and ethnic communities, it is often helpful to translate the fact sheet into the predominant language of the community.

Use other resources at your disposal to provide technical information, particularly to property managers and homeowners. An excellent resource in many states is your agricultural extension service - customers view them as unbiased. Use the internet. Industry magazines and many manufacturers and distributors have excellent resource materials you can use to develop bulletins and fact sheets for your customers. Website content in today's media environment is crucial to a successful business.

If your company is stuck in a rut and growth is something you measure in inches, take a serious look at your company's communication skills and find out whether you are communicating with your customers or talking to them. To this end, every owner and manager should ensure that their customer service reps and technicians are subject matter experts and are able to communicate this expertise to your customers.

Spring 2025

Join your East Coast Pest Control Colleagues in Savannah!

The NPMA Mid-Atlantic Conference is being held in Savannah, GA, July 31 through Aug. 2 at the lovely Westin Savannah Harbor. This is a great opportunity to expand your industry network with owners and managers throughout the Mid-Atlantic states. In addition to the quality education sessions featuring the latest in technical research, we are excited for an array of social functions, including a Mid-Atlantic Family Picnic and a closing BBQ Lunch! Sponsors and Exhibitors will be featured in the Exhibit Hall during the Welcome Reception and Breakfast.



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