

CLEMSON UNIVERSITY

~ URBAN ENTOMOLOGY EXTENSION & RESEARCH ~

Palmetto Pestalk November 2001 Newsletter¹

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Over the long Thanksgiving weekend we had many family plans. Of course, the big focus of Thanksgiving day was a big turkey dinner followed by pecan and pumpkin pies. But like many homeowners, I also wanted to get a few projects done around the house. One seemingly innocent project was clearing a 4 x 6 foot area in our storage room to make a train table for my son. He has recently become quite interested in model trains and I've become tired of stepping on sharp-edged train cars in the middle of the night. A train table seemed to be the perfect solution to meet both our needs.

When you place a train table in a storage room, it means that some stuff in storage has to be moved. I figured that it would only take an hour or two to clear the area for the table. I even had my father-in-law visiting and he loves to stay busy helping with domestic projects. As our project progressed, it became difficult to decide what to do with all of the displaced storage. My wife decided it would be a good idea to make some new, "simple" shelves out of the many pieces of leftover wood I have from my tree house project. My father-in-law pointed out that I needed more electrical outlets around the table area and I decided that a light with a dimmer

switch (very important to simulate night time train runs) would also be great. And since we were going to all of this trouble, we all decided it would be nice to finish the store-room's stud walls with rustic paneling.

I no longer have a storage room. My wife now refers to this location in our home as the Train Lounge. After about 30 hours of work, I still do not have the "simple" train table in place, but I do have a finished lounge and additional space to move in an old couch and refrigerator. As most men reading this know, it is important to be able to rest and refresh oneself after a long day "riding the rails".

My wife believes that I've been sidetracked (pun intended) by poor planning, lack of focus and the mind of a child. While all this may be true, I believe that I will be successful in having a first rate train table for my son by Christmas.

Being successful at whatever we do is a goal for most of us whether it is a home project or our work. However, how to define success, target success, and achieve success can be a challenge. To help us all, especially in our difficult economy, we've selected **Targeting Success** as our theme for the Annual South Carolina Pest Control Association Winter Meeting, February 12- 14. Our keynote speaker will be Mr. Bill Sharp. Bill will talk about the Five T's of Success (but sadly, trains are not one of the T's). We'll also have a special manager's session

where Bill will present the Psychology of Buying and Selling. Both sessions should be excellent!

Other well-known leaders in our industry will also speak. Dr. George Rambo will cover several termite related topics including troubleshooting the difficult house, doing inspections and the latest in detection equipment. Dr. Dan Suiter from the University will talk about Argentine ant control and Formosan termites. Mr. Jim Wright will talk about understanding new termiticides. Many other speakers will cover topics including on West Nile virus, fly control, rodent control, powder post beetles, old house borer, bed bugs, lice, stinging caterpillars and keeping pesticides safe. We will also have two panel discussions on moisture control and problems and remedies with foamboard insulation and related products. Please take a moment to look at the entire program and details for registration enclosed in this issue of Pestalk.

Contain. Contain. Contain!

Each year we conduct four Termite Technician Training Courses. Two of the classes are for apprentice technicians and two classes are for master technicians. Though the courses are different, there is some overlap in material. For example, personal safety and environmental concerns are so important, we cover both topics in all of our programs. One key point of our environmental lecture is what you should do when you are involved with a termiticide spill. The important and immediate

response: CONTAIN IT. The following may bring this lesson home.

Recently, a pest control company in Maryland was charged with federal law violations resulting in the killing of fish and other aquatic life in a tributary of the Potomac River. Specifically, employees at the company were charged with a felony violation of the Clean Water Act (CWA) and a misdemeanor violation of the Federal Insecticide, Fungicide and Rodenticide Act. The charges were in connection with a spill of the termiticide Preval, onto the parking lot at the company's facility. Preval contains the pyrethroid cypermethrin, which is extremely toxic to fish and other aquatic life. Apparently, instead of cleaning up the spill with absorbents as advised on the pesticide's label, the spill was washed with a hose into a storm drain that emptied into the creek. If convicted, the company faces a maximum of up to \$700,000 in fines and several employees could go to jail and pay an additional \$100,000 - \$200,000 in fines.

The last thing you want to do is spray a spill with water, sending it into a storm-water or drinking water system. You should contain the spill with absorbent material that can ultimately be returned to your tank or directly applied to an approved termiticide treatment site. For \$700,000, company could buy a lot of the absorbent snakes, soak-up products, kitty litter or shovels to throw dirt on the spill. If you are unclear about the steps you should take when involved with a spill, check your termiticide labels and ask your local field specialist with the department of pesticide regulation or with extension agents for guidelines. You should know

the proper procedures so you make the right decisions and act quickly.

Blow Flies For The Holidays

This time of year, a number of insects come into homes seeking shelter from cold temperatures. Smokybrown cockroaches and lady beetles are two common invaders. The cluster fly is another species that prefers the warmth of a house to the rigors of the woods for the long winter.

This fall I have quite a few adult fly samples from homes. However, most have not been cluster flies, but rather Calliphorids (family: Calliphoridae), known commonly as blow flies or greenbottle and bluebottle flies. After a little investigating, I found that one species in particular has been sent to Clemson this time of year on a regular basis since the 1930's. It is *Calliphora vicina*, one of the bluebottle flies. Like most flies in this group, bluebottle flies are scavengers. They are about a half-inch in length with a metallic blue sheen. Most flies in this family make the distinctive fly buzzing sound as they tirelessly fly throughout a house, especially around windows.

In general, blow flies are common around slaughter-houses, meat-processing plants and garbage dumps. They can often find an animal within 20 minutes of its death. At times, blow flies can become abundant around homes, especially in agricultural areas where live stock is kept or where people have outdoor pets. Overall, the adults are strong fliers and can travel several mile to find the carcass of their dreams.

Although blow flies usually lay their eggs on meat or dead animals, when meat or animal excrement is not present they may lay eggs on decaying

vegetable matter. Maggots first feed on the surface of the decaying material and then burrow down to less-decayed material. The full-grown larvae usually burrow into the ground to pupate, usually in the top two inches of soil. Most species have several generations a year and over-winter as final-stage, diapausing (hibernating) larvae.

So if you find blow flies/bluebottle flies clustering this time of year, remember that they are most active during warm and sunny weather. When it is cool and cloudy, they tend to retreat to resting sites, usually on vegetation adjacent to areas where they place their eggs. When the weather turns cold, some adult will seek shelter in homes. This does not necessarily mean the client has a problem in the house, but only a good inspection can determine the source of the flies. For example, blow flies can breed in the carcasses of dead birds in wall voids, attics or chimneys, in rodents that have been left in traps too long, trash cans, rotting vegetables or in dog droppings decorating a back yard. Even raw meat and fish in commercial accounts needs to be considered sites for egg-laying adults. Blow flies can vector diseases, so their control with targeted sprays, light traps, exclusion and removal of breeding sites is important. There is no place in a home for blow flies during the holidays.

Ole Stoney

Want to get an entomologists all excited? Then tell him this: the largest complete fossil of a cockroach was found in the United States by scientists from Ohio State University. Ole Stoney (my name for the critter) was about the size of a mouse and lived about 55 million years before the first dinosaur roamed the earth.

Stoney lived in eastern Ohio during a time when the Buckeye State was a tropical swamp. Preserved better than most fossils, Ole Stoney has visible legs, antennae and mouth parts. Veins can be seen on its wings as well as fine bumps covering the wing surface.

Besides just being cool, scientists are excited about the discovery because it could shed light on the diversity of ancient life and how the Earth's climate has changed throughout history. Ole Stoney is notable because he is so intact for an ancient fossil. Also most fossils are from animals with shells or bones, not insects. Fortunately, the swamp where Ole Stoney met his fate preserved organisms without shell or bones in great detail. All Ole Stoney had to do was wait about 300 million years to be rediscovered.

EPA Plans Against Terrorism

Since September 11th, many federal agencies have been responding to the potential of future terrorist attacks. The Environmental Protection Agency is no exception. In fact, the EPA has several fact sheets on responding to terrorism before September 11th. The following fact sheets are on the EPA's web site and may be of interest to you:

EPA's Role in Counter-Terrorism Activities (since Feb 1998)
<http://www.epa.gov/swercepp/factsheets/ct-fctsh.pdf>

Chemical Accident Prevention Site Security (since Feb 2000)
<http://www.epa.gov/swercepp/pubs/secale.pdf>

LEPCs and Deliberate Releases Addressing Terrorist Activities in the Local Emergency Plan (since Aug 2001)

<http://www.epa.gov/swercepp/factsheets/lepccct.pdf>

Disappearing Pesticides

Over the past few years, you've probably heard a lot about the Food Quality Protection Act (FQPA). Since the act was passed, nearly one thousand pesticide registrations have been canceled by the EPA for nonpayment of registration fees. As part of FQPA/reregistration of pesticides, the EPA increased the fee to maintain pesticide registrations. As a result, many companies have stopped the registration of their products. In many cases, the canceled registrations are for products that are not longer market. If you want to see the entire list of canceled pesticides you can go to the web site: <http://www.epa.gov/fedrgstr/EPA-PEST/2001/July/Day-25/p18537.htm>.

Major Manufacturer Merger

When I talk to various pest control organizations about termite control, I often asked folks to raise their hands if they are using certain termiticides. A few years ago, almost everyone would raise their hands when I asked who was using Dursban TC. This response has changed over the last few years. The majority of pest management professionals I pose this question to now raise their hands for Premise or Termidor. Premise is manufactured by Bayer and Termidor is manufactured by Aventis CropScience. Both products are considered non-repellent termiticides.

This past October, the Germany-based Bayer Corporation agreed to buy Aventis's agrochemicals unit, CropScience, for \$ 7.25 billion. Bayer is Europe's second largest chemicals company, has been in talks with

Aventis since July to buy the CropScience business. Bayer's Chief Executive, Manfred Schneider has stated that the acquisition will give Bayer a leading position in agrochemicals, which is a \$33 billion-a-year market.

Aventis CropScience employs about 15,300 people in more than 120 countries and had sales of approximately \$4 billion in 2000. This merger will create Bayer CropScience with combined sales expected to total between \$6.5 billion and \$7 billion in 2001. Wow! This will make Bayer the world's second-largest agrochemical company behind Switzerland's Syngenta. The acquisition process is expected to be completed in the first quarter of 2002, said the company. As part of the agreement, Aventis will be responsible for any potential liabilities arising from the controversy over StarLink genetically modified corn, which had been approved for use in animal but not human feed. StarLink corn has been found in consumer foods. The trimmer Aventis Corporation will also focus its efforts on pharmaceuticals.

Both Bayer and Aventis CropScience have been important manufacturers and supporters of our industry. It will be interesting to see the progression of the merged companies and the resulting product lines and services. I don't know who will raise their hands for Premise or Termidor in the future, or if my questions will even be pertinent. I do know that the world of termite control will continue to evolve and will never be boring.

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