

URBAN ENTOMOLOGY EXTENSION & RESEARCH

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Surprisingly, my 16 year old son, Corey, has developed an interest in languages. He is one of the few kids taking both Spanish and German in high school. He now wants to learn Italian (probably to earn major points (cash) with his Italian grandmother). The high school doesn't teach Italian, so we suggested going to the local community college for a summer course. Unfortunately, we discovered the local community college doesn't have an Italian course, but Clemson University does. Though it would be more expensive, we offered to pay for our son to take the Clemson Italian course. He balked at the idea. We asked him why.

Corey said, "I think if I take Italian at a community college I will learn it, but if I

take Italian at Clemson, I'll be educated about it". My wife and I, both Clemson professors, thought his comment was significant. While there is nothing wrong with being educated about many things, if you want to be excited about and own something, you want to learn it. Corey doesn't want to know about Italian, he wants to learn it; he wants to own it.

My guess is that when it comes to the pest control business, you don't want to be educated about pest control; you want to learn it, own it, and be excited about it. You want to become fluent in the "language". That is a fair and reasonable expectation that educators, such as myself, should take to heart.

Each day I set a goal to learn something new. Sometimes I learn from books or other teachers, but more often than not, I learn from you, the professional in the trenches; and at times, I'm humbled and proud to learn a lesson from my son. There is a difference between learning for education's sake and learning to learn.

**2008 Dates Set For
Training Programs**

The dates for our workshops and schools are set for 2008. The Master Pest Control Technician Course at Clemson University will be

June 1-6, 2008. This week-long course is designed for pest control technicians with over 40 hours of field, classroom and laboratory instruction. Students stay on the Clemson campus and have access to our classrooms, labs, computer system and campus. Specific details and registration materials are in separate inserts in this issue of Pestalk.

The Apprentice Termite Technician (ATT) Programs are set for August 4-5 and August 6-7. The Master Termite Technician (MTT) Programs are set for October 16-17 and November 6-7. Both programs are held each year at Clemson's Sandhill Research and Education Center in Columbia, SC. Registration materials for the ATT and MTT will be in the next issue of Pestalk. Register early if you want to attend either the ATT or MTT programs, because they fill up fast.

The next Wood Infestation Report (WIR) Training workshop is scheduled for September 5, 2008 at the Lake House at the Sandhill Research and Education Center. Enrollment for this one-day workshop will be capped at 40 participants. Registration materials will be in a future issue of Pestalk, but pencil-in the date on your calendar if you plan to attend.

The 50th Annual South Carolina Pest Control School is planned for February 10–12, 2009 at the Marriott Hotel in downtown Columbia, SC. This should be a special event and we hope many pest management professionals will plan to make this golden anniversary conference.

If you have any questions about any of the upcoming programs, please contact Jackie Ellis by phone at 864/656-5048 or by email at jells@clemson.edu.

In The Game This Past February

The 49th Annual South Carolina Pest Control School went well, with almost 500 participants. Jeff Davis, 2007 inductee of the College Football Hall of Fame, was well received as he challenged everyone to be “In the Game” as he focused his motivational opening session talk about having a winning attitude about everything we do. A few of our other super speakers included Cindy Mannes who talked about marketing to the 21st century customer and Allen Fugler who talked about keeping complaints from becoming lawsuits. Paul Bello conducted a session on what customers really want and Greg Yarrow conducted several sessions on nuisance wildlife control. It was great to also have George Rambo discussing termite pretreatments, Mike Hood providing an update on Africanized bees and Pat Zungoli updating us on Asian cockroaches in SC.

As in the past, the evaluations of the program were very positive. Most questions on the program evaluation were on a scale of 1 to 5 with 1 = strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = neither, 4 = agree and 5 = strongly agree. Over 250 evaluations were turned in. When asked “Overall, the presentations provided useful information” participants gave an average response of 4.28. When asked “I am better prepared to comply with Department of Pesticide regulations”, the participants gave an average response of 4.10. Some of evaluations included comments such as:” Jeff Davis was excellent”, “The vendors are one of the strengths of the school”, and “Fellowship with others was great!” Participants continue to like the open forums and discussion sessions on Wednesday afternoon.

After you have scanned and enjoyed some of the candid pictures from the meeting in this issue of Pestalk, please take a moment to think about program ideas for our 50th annual meeting next February. This is an opportunity to reminisce about the past, look to the future and plan a memorable conference.

Termite Technician Training Foundation Improvements Underway

Improvements to the training foundation at the Sandhill Research and Education Center (REC) in Columbia have started. Used for the Master (MTT) and

Apprentice (ATT) Termite Technician training programs, the entire foundation is being covered by an open-sided pavilion. In addition, a new large storage shed has been constructed. The shed will allow ample room for all of our training equipment, including our two rigs, to be stored and demonstrated on site. The \$70,000 construction fees for the foundation shelter and storage shed are being funded by Clemson University with \$40,000 from the Department of Pesticide Regulation and \$30,000 for the Department of Entomology, Soils and Plant Sciences.

Recently, most of the MTT and ATT instructors met with Fred Cliff, Ricky Wingard and David Clark to look constructing structural enhancements at the site that will improve our training programs. The financial support and input of SCPCA members is critical to make quality improvements. Some of the planned improvements include a pre-treatment demonstration area, more examples of slab types, porches, foundation styles and porch construction; a wood deck, floor and joist construction, and superstructure construction typically found in SC and encountered by termite technicians doing treatments. Our plan is to have many of the new features added by the 2008 August ATT program. Any thoughts or ideas concerning this project can be directed to SCPCA President Bobby Townsend, SCPCA

Executive Secretary Fred Cliff or me. And if you are in the area, go by the Sandhill REC and look at the new facility. I think you'll like it!

Rover Ants

If you've been having a lot of problems with Argentine ants, odorous house ants or little black ants, maybe the ants are not what you think they are! Over the last few years, we've been getting more unusual ants submitted from problem accounts by PMPs. One group that has often been confused as Argentine ants, odorous house ants or little black ants have been ants in the genus *Brachymyrmex*. Generically, this group of ants is called rover ants.

Like many ant pests, rover ants are exotic, probably coming from South America to the USA around 1970 or before. While we have not made many species identifications, based on identification work in other southeastern states, most of the rover ants encountered appears to be *Brachymyrmex patagonicus*. These ants can be very persistent and difficult to control.

Rover ants are about 1/16 inch long (smaller than Argentine and odorous house ants) and dark brown to reddish brown in color. Workers are all the same size. They have one node, but as with odorous house ants, it is difficult to see. Little black ants have two nodes. If you have a good hand lens or microscope, you can count the segments of the antennae.

Many pest ants we battle have 12 segmented antennae, but rover ants only have 9 antennal segments.

Rover ants can be common in wooded areas, but will nest in and around buildings. They like high moisture areas and may be found around bathrooms, plumbing penetrations and structural leaks. Colonies tend to be small with only one queen, but there can be many colonies around a structure. Like Argentine ants, they like to feed on honeydew secreted from aphids and similar insects on plants, and will come indoors to find sweet foods.

Being tiny and with the potential of many colonies, control can be difficult. Sweet-based baits can be effective, but many placements may be needed to get to multiple colonies. Insecticidal dusts or foam treatments in voids and exterior granular or spray perimeter treatments may help too. Also, the usual non-chemical control measures such as trimming tree limbs and bushes close to structures, reducing excessive mulch and fixing moisture problems will help. *Source: Blake Layton and Joe MacGown, Mississippi State University.*