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2021

Fall
Edition

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The WILD Life

BY JANE PEIFER, *Ampest Exterminating & Wildlife Control*



'GROUNDHOGS'

Each year groundhogs enjoy 15 minutes of fame—and then most people proceed to forget about them completely. Held every year on February 2, Groundhog Day is a unique U.S. celebration in which



people turn to these mammals to predict the weather: If the groundhog sees its shadow on that day, lore has it there will be six more weeks of

winter. **But what else is there to know about these annual celebrities?**

ABOUT THEIR NAME: Groundhogs are referred to as woodchucks, whistle pigs or land beavers. The name woodchuck has nothing to do with wood or chucking. It's derived from an Algonquin Indian name for the critters - wuchak. The name whistle pig comes from the fact that, when alarmed, a groundhog will emit a high-pitched whistle as a warning to the rest of its colony. The groundhog is often mistaken for a beaver because of the flat tail and beaver-like teeth hence the name land beaver.

PHYSICAL FEATURES: Groundhogs are large, heavy-bodied rodents attaining weights of 5 to 12 pounds and can be up to 2 feet long. They are covered with coarse hair ranging in color from brown to reddish yellow, usually tipped with silver. Their feet have five claw-bearing digits with thick, slightly curved claws. The head is short and broad. The legs are short

and thickset. The tail is densely haired, slightly flattened and close to 1/3 of the animal's total length.

RELATIVES: Groundhogs are related to squirrels. They are the largest member of the squirrel family.

HABITAT: They build impressive homes. A groundhog's burrow can be anywhere from 8 to 66 feet long, with multiple exits and a number of chambers. They have a burrow for hibernating, and then they have another section of the burrow that's more like their summer home where they can come out more easily. In some cases, groundhogs have more than one residence and move from one burrow to another.

FOOD: Primarily herbivores, groundhogs eat a variety of plants, including from people's gardens. But they also may eat things we consider pests, such as grubs, other insects, and snails.

MATING & BABIES: Groundhogs are basically loners, seeking out their own kind only to mate. Even their maternal duty to their young is short and sweet. As soon as the young are weaned, they go off on their own. Pregnancy goes by fast for them. Groundhog mating season is in the early spring and, after only a month-long pregnancy, mother groundhogs typically give birth to a litter of two to six blind, hairless babies. Young groundhogs are called kits, pups, or sometimes chucklings.



HIBERNATION: Groundhogs are known as "true hibernators," going into a dormant state in which their body temperature and heart rate fall dramatically from late fall until late winter or early spring. Groundhogs go through bouts of "torpor". Torpor is a state of decreased physiological activity in an animal, usually by a reduced body temperature and metabolic rate. Torpor enables animals to survive periods of reduced food availability. Groundhogs will do this for about a week, then wake up for three or four days, then go back into torpor. They do this about 12 to 20 times in the hibernation season.



ACTIVITIES: Groundhogs are capable of climbing trees and swimming, though they spend most of their time on the ground. They make their burrows in fields and other open spaces near woodlands.

FUN FACT: Groundhogs greet each other with an odd variation of the Eskimo kiss: one groundhog approaches and touches his or her nose to the mouth of the second groundhog.



So next time someone asks you, “how much wood would a woodchuck chuck if a woodchuck could chuck wood?”, you can tell them none!

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

CONTINUED

very easy to pay without all the various things that can go wrong, like not getting the email, or the post card getting lost in the mail, or simply just forgetting. We will have it figured out. At any rate, if you have any questions please refer to your email or we will have a phone number for you to call.

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GARY PIETRUCHA, *GCPMA President & Envirosafe Pest Management President*

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PRESEASON TRAINING GIVES TECHNICIANS AN EDGE

ARTICLE FROM PCT MAGAZINE: pctonline.com

By Donna DeFranco

Hit the books! Now's the time to engage staff by offering a variety of training opportunities.

The best time to train service technicians is before warmer weather sets in — whenever that might be in your markets. Even in territories that stay warm all year, an uptick in temperature means more or different pests to manage; preparing your team ahead of time gives them the tools and confidence to get out there and excel once the busy season begins.

“We have monthly training meetings throughout the slower season, November through March, to let technicians know what to expect from spring and summer; review tools, techniques and pest ID; and update them on any industry and policy changes that may affect them,” says Caroline Kirby, training coordinator at Plunkett’s Pest Control and Varmint Guard. “It’s a good time for them to take a breather, network with other technicians and supervisors, and focus on learning.”

It’s important to engage these team members by offering a variety of training tools, ranging from individualized online education and webinars, which they can take advantage of on days when they can’t get out on the road or have lighter schedules, to classroom instruction, kept interesting through videos, interactive presentations using online learning tools, and opportunities for hands-on exercises like practicing using equipment, she adds.

Consultant Stoy Hedges says that many companies find March to be an ideal month for training. “It’s a great time to review what happened across your markets the previous year — maybe you had a lot of crazy ant service calls or saw more smokybrown cockroaches than in years past. Talk about how to identify those pests, what products worked well with them, and what you’ll do differently to minimize callbacks this season,” he says.

In fact, conversation among technicians and supervisors is one of the most valuable training tools, says Cory Goeltzenleuchter, technical director at McCall Service. He encourages team members

to share their experiences regularly. “When a technician sees an unexpected resurgence of a certain ant species, they need to know that they can help technicians in other markets by sharing that information,” he explains. “Most of our branches have a texting chain for this type of networking. We also have an employees-only Facebook account for posting photos and messages like, ‘I just saw my first Eastern subterranean termite swarm of the year.’ Everyone learns from one another.”

Kirby, Hedges and Goeltzenleuchter share insights into essential preseason training topics:

PEST BIOLOGY. Understanding your region’s pests, from species identification to behaviors, is paramount to service success. The key is to instill this knowledge prior to pests’ springtime resurgence, says Goeltzenleuchter. “We see pests year-round here in Florida and southern Georgia, so we conduct training year-round,” he says. “We focus on several pests a month, and just before spring, we gear our training toward termite swarms, mosquitoes and ants, so our technicians can put control measures into place before activity accelerates.”

PRODUCTS. It’s critical to take stock of the products you will be using over the season and review their proper usage. Hedges says that this is a good time for HAZMAT and PPE training, SDS training and label review. “The PCT Distance Learning Center label training modules can be particularly helpful as technicians build on their product knowledge,” he says. “They can be projected on a screen in a classroom setting, or technicians can learn individually on their handheld devices or laptops.”

SALES/CUSTOMER EDUCATION.

Goeltzenleuchter reminds that it’s not only your team but also your customers who need preseason training. “Customer education is a huge part of effective control,” he says. “Technicians need to think ahead about when they will be visiting a certain account next and communicate what that customer needs to know to prepare for the coming season — minimizing conducive conditions, for example.”

It's important to engage these team members by offering a variety of training tools, ranging from individualized online education and webinars to classroom instruction, kept interesting through videos, interactive presentations using online learning tools, and opportunities for hands-on exercises like practicing using equipment.

EQUIPMENT. Spring and summer pest activity demands a well-organized truck, adds Kirby. "Teach or remind technicians how to make sure their equipment is in working order — calibrated and cleaned — so their trucks are ready to go."

TIME MANAGEMENT. A well-organized truck is one element of what Kirby says can be a true challenge for technicians: time management. "Technicians can get so busy that the day can get away from them if they haven't carefully planned it out," she says. "This is a very important area to address, because it affects not only productivity but also job satisfaction and morale."

INSPECTIONS. The preseason is a good time to remind your team to inspect closely for structural damage that might have occurred to customers' property during the winter. "Identify cracks and crevices that may need to be sealed up, focusing on windows and doors, the frame and trim, and the attic," advises Hedges.

FINAL THOUGHTS. Goeltzenleuchter says it's smart, too, to help technicians anticipate what's coming next — e.g., rainy weather and termite season — and focus their inspections on conducive conditions that could become problematic. "Excessive moisture, leaf litter, containers, bushes up against the house — help technicians understand the importance of inspecting everything and taking appropriate measures themselves or advising their customers of what needs to be done before spring pests emerge," he says.

SOURCE: www.pctonline.com/article/preseason-training-gives-technicians-an-edge/

IMPORTANT INFORMATION • IMPORTANT INFORMATION • IMPORTANT INFORMATION

A MEETING OF THE MINDS XIII

OCTOBER 20, 2021

AT THE TINLEY PARK CONVENTION CENTER • TINLEY PARK, IL



The GCPMA is excited to announce our current plans to host Meeting of the Minds this year, in person, at the Tinley Park Convention Center. This year's conference will take place on October 20th with a line up consisting of Dr. Bill Robinson, Dr. Janis Reed, Dr. Stan Cope (Catchmaster), and Dr. Jason Meyers (BASF).

In conjunction with the conference, on October 19th the Alliance is offering a 2.5 hour General Standards practice session host by Dr. Curt Colwell in the morning and the IDPH General Standards exam following. Availability for these sessions are limited so we advise to register as soon as possible to guarantee a spot.

There will be 6 hours of continuing education available. We will have a number of vendors at the conference, but there will be specific Covid Protocol that must be followed. Here they are:

1. **Masks are required at all times.**
2. **No handshaking.**
3. **We will have a number of hand sanitizing stations on site.**
4. **Social distancing necessary.**

We are very excited and hope to see everyone. If we all cooperate and follow these easy rules, we will have a very successful conference.

Please go to our website, www.gcpma.com, to register and for further information.

MOSQUITO CONTROL: FOUR WAYS TO PROTECT CUSTOMERS

ARTICLE FROM PCT MAGAZINE: pctonline.com

By Kristen Stevens, B.C.E.

During these uncertain times, as customers may be spending more time outdoors, PMPs need to help them take control of mosquitoes in their backyards.

The mosquitoes that PMPs primarily deal with are among the genera *Aedes*, *Anopheles* and *Culex*. Although mosquitoes are not responsible for spreading COVID-19, they are responsible for spreading several other diseases that can cause public health concerns. *Aedes* mosquitoes are known vectors of Zika, Dengue, Chikungunya, yellow fever and Rift Valley fever. *Culex* mosquitoes can carry West Nile virus, multiple forms of encephalitis, and other viral diseases of birds and horses. *Anopheles* mosquitoes are infamously known for their ability to spread malaria; however, these mosquitoes also are able to transmit other diseases. This is why it is important that we as PMPs take action to help control mosquitoes so that our customers don't have anxiety about other viral diseases. What follows are four steps that we can take to help our customers eliminate mosquitoes this season.

1. IDENTIFYING THE MOSQUITO

As with many other areas of our business, identification is key. Just as *Aedes*, *Culex* and *Anopheles* mosquitoes are very different in their biology and habitats, the means for effectively controlling them differ, too. *Aedes* mosquitoes are what we refer to as backyard mosquitoes or container-breeding mosquitoes. These mosquitoes like to breed in any container that will hold water; the container can be as small as a bottle cap or as large as an empty swimming pool. Not only do they breed in close proximity to humans, they are also what we refer to as daytime biters, i.e., they feed during dawn and dusk, times at which many people are outside. Other mosquitoes will be most active during the evening when people are not as active. Why is this important to know? This tells us that more than likely the cause of an infestation is near our customers' homes and that a larvicidal treatment is necessary to achieve control of these mosquitoes.

Culex mosquitoes, on the other hand, commonly breed in stagnant or polluted water. Potential breeding sites include storm drains, catch basins and septic tanks. These water sources also have a little bit of water movement to them, whereas *Aedes* mosquitoes do not like water movement and prefer standing water. *Anopheles* mosquitoes will breed in small, restricted bodies of water that are surrounded by vegetation. So while larvicidal treatment is critical for *Aedes* mosquito control, a comprehensive adulticide treatment is important for limiting *Culex* and *Anopheles* populations. Depending on the situation, larviciding may be just as important for controlling the latter two genera as well. This is why knowing the mosquito and where it's breeding are vital to successful mosquito control.

2. LARVAL MOSQUITO CONTROL

Sometimes our industry forgets that larval control of mosquitoes can be just as important — if not more important in some cases — than adult control. Larval control starts with a thorough inspection of the area around a customer's home or business for larval habitats. The first three stages of the mosquito's life are aquatic, so they are breeding in one of the sites mentioned previously, depending on the type of mosquito. When addressing issues with *Aedes* mosquitoes, a larvicidal treatment is 100 percent necessary. Control of *Culex* and *Anopheles* may not require a larvicidal treatment depending on where they are breeding, but it's never a bad idea to practice larval control, especially because you may be dealing with more than one type of mosquito.

There are different methods that we can use to conduct a successful larval treatment. There are mosquito dunks or briquettes that can be used for treating larger bodies of water over time. They contain a bacterium that, when ingested by the mosquito, causes its gut to burst, leading to its death. There are also various mosquito pellets or granules with an insect growth regulator (IGR) as the active ingredient. IGRs help to prevent larval mosquitoes

from reaching adulthood. There are also oils that can be applied to the surfaces of water that will not allow mosquitoes to breach the surface for breathing, ultimately suffocating them.

3. ADULT MOSQUITO CONTROL

During the warmest parts of the day, mosquitoes will conserve energy and find places to rest. Some of the most common mosquito resting sites are shaded areas under the leaves of trees and bushes. This is important to know when applying adulticides for mosquitoes. For example, when treating with mosquito blowers, we need to apply the product thoroughly to these mosquito resting areas. The term typically used is to apply “to the point of run off.” What exactly does this mean? In practice it means, for instance, that a treated bush shouldn’t be profusely dripping with product but should be wet enough that it is covered and slightly dripping. Applications should be done in a circular motion to guarantee that all treatment areas are well covered. The undersides of trees also need to be addressed. Since mosquitoes are unable to fly very high, treating the undersides of trees up to 10 feet is the best approach to take, as anything higher would not be effective.

4. CUSTOMER EDUCATION AND EMPLOYEE TRAINING

Education is a vital part of our industry. We need to take time to educate our customers as well as ourselves and our employees. Customers may expect their mosquito problems to be completely solved as soon as we leave their homes or businesses, but as we know, that is not possible. We are not in the business of pest elimination, but rather pest control. It is our responsibility to control mosquitoes to the best of our capabilities, but fully eliminating mosquitoes in a given area is nearly impossible. It is imperative that we communicate this distinction to our customers and set appropriate expectations. Even though we may apply a thorough treatment to their yard to help control mosquitoes, perhaps their neighbors did not receive the same type of treatment. Yes, it is likely that they will see some mosquito activity, but we can and should assure them that we have controlled the mosquito populations within the treated area so they can spend time outside without being inundated. And yes, one or two mosquitoes may still be seen.

On the other hand, educating ourselves and our employees is just as important.

Every day brings new discoveries; there are hundreds (if not thousands) of people researching mosquitoes, their diseases and new and improved control methods. If we do not stay up to date on the most current methods of control, our treatment may not be as effective as it could be.

FINAL THOUGHTS. No single aspect of mosquito control is a silver bullet for taking a bite out of mosquitoes’ meal plans. By taking time to identify and become familiar with mosquitoes in our service areas, treating mosquitoes throughout their development lifecycle and educating customers and ourselves, we can provide the best possible control of mosquitoes and peace of mind to our customers. Mosquitoes are considered the most deadly animal in the world, and it is our responsibility as PMPs to protect our customers’ health and safety.

SOURCE: www.pctonline.com/article/4-ways-to-protect-customers/

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TREATING INDOOR ANT INFESTATIONS WITH THE CLIENT IN MIND

CONTRIBUTED BY ZOËCON



Even though most ant species do not cause as much damage as other pests PMPs handle daily, ant infestations spur frequent callbacks and numerous headaches for technicians and clients alike. For many clients, ant infestations can be embarrassing, despite how common they are in homes and businesses everywhere. Dive in to get more information on treating indoor ant infestations with stellar customer service.

1 INSPECT AREA THOROUGHLY

Although calls from clients with ant infestations are the PMP's bread and butter, that familiarity can lead to missed steps, especially when it comes to indoor spaces. Inspecting inside the home often means more interaction with the client and more potential distractions. It's also easy for technicians to fall into a treatment rhythm, but performing a thorough inspection will allow you to treat with accuracy and efficiency. A thorough inspection will also allow you to give the client better, more targeted prevention tips for future infestations.

2 IDENTIFY ANT SPECIES

Identifying the ant species at hand is equally important to a thorough inspection. The two go hand in hand. Having all the available information will help eradicate the problem colony and reduce callbacks. PMPs with extensive knowledge of ant biology, nesting, and foraging habits will be best equipped to identify the problem species correctly and treat them efficiently.

3 INVOLVE CLIENT IN TREATMENT

When it's time to treat the infestation, PMPs who involve the client in treatment options will not only have a higher satisfaction rate but may also be able to improve the efficiency of each visit. A client who feels listened to, valued, and included in the process will be more patient and willing to let treatment take its course. Reducing callbacks isn't just about choosing the right product, it's also about making sure your client knows the ins and outs of the chosen treatment.

4 BAIT APPLICATION TIPS

When treating with ant bait, correct application can be just as critical as choosing the right product. First, make sure the ant bait is the only food option around. A common reason for callbacks is that the ants have a better food source. Second, make sure bait is placed when ants are foraging and on the correct level, where ants are likely to reach it. For example, an ant bait station laid on a commercial kitchen floor may not be effective for ants coming in through a window.

5 INFORM CLIENTS WITH KINDNESS

There is a way to inform clients that cleanliness is crucial, especially in areas where food is present, without sounding judgmental. It is important that clients know ant infestations can happen even if they run a clean ship. Ants want shelter and sustenance just like humans do. So, naturally, they would be drawn to the places where we find shelter and sustenance. When targeting an infestation and applying bait, let clients know that increasing efforts to keep surfaces spotless and food sealed will make ant bait all the more attractive.

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Approved for both indoor and outdoor use, Antack™ Liquid Ant Bait is a product PMPs can turn to for effective control of ant infestations and reduced callbacks. It features the active ingredient spinosad, which targets an ant's nervous system to wipe out the colony and queen for numerous ant species. Utilize this liquid product with a built-in dispensing tip to knock out ant infestations in residential, industrial or recreational locations.



MURDER HORNETS 2021: 1ST LIVE GIANT STINGING INSECT SPOTTED FOR THIS YEAR IN US

ARTICLE FROM ABC7 NEWS: abc7chicago.com

Friday, August 13, 2021

They're back: Washington state is reporting the first live sighting of a murder hornet in the U.S. this year.

A photo was released of the large murder hornet, which is native to Asia, attacking a wasp nest.

State officials are asking residents to keep an eye out for the hornets, and report any sightings to the Washington State Department of Agriculture. Murder hornets were first spotted in Washington in 2019.

In October of last year, the WSDA found and eradicated a murder hornet nest just 2 miles away from this latest sighting.

Murder hornets are five times larger than honey bees, with a stinger 1/4 of an inch long that can penetrate a beekeeper's suit.



"They can sting you multiple times, and deliver venom multiple times," said Sven Spichiger, WSDA managing entomologist.

The hornets are a major threat to the food supply, as experts fear they could wipe out the honey bee population that pollinates crops.

They're also a danger to animals and humans, killing up to 50 people a year in Japan.


Experts said murder hornets are not especially aggressive toward humans, but those huge stingers are dangerous. They're too big for traditional traps, so officials have to use orange juice, rice vinegar and other homemade measures to lure them in.

Officials said if you see a murder hornet, note the direction it flies off in, and report it to authorities.

SOURCE: abc7chicago.com/pets-animals/murder-hornets-washington-1st-live-insect-of-2021-in-us-spotted/10949259/

Watch the video at the website above for more details!

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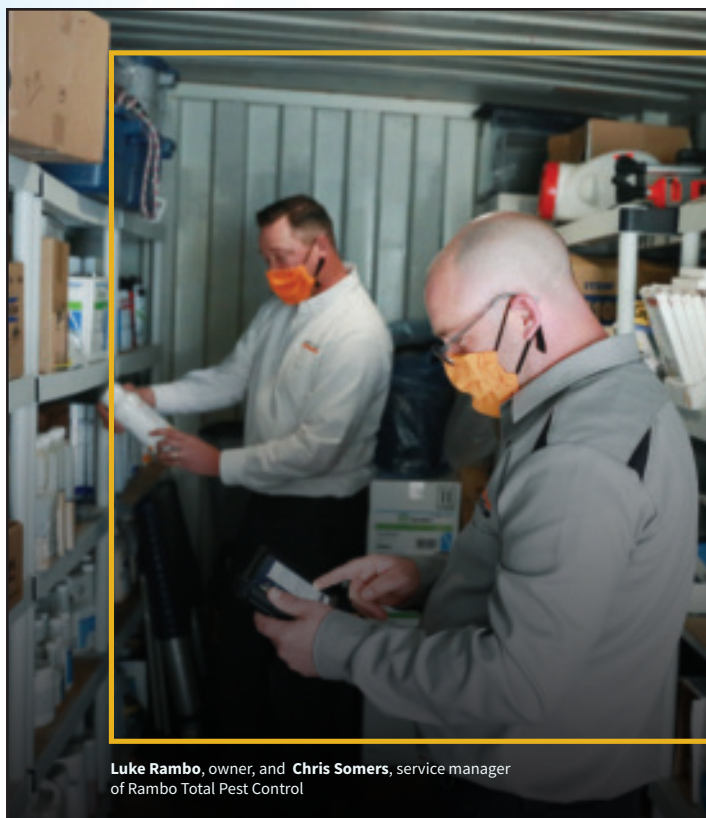
ANNOUNCING THE 2021 RECIPIENT OF THE GCPMA SCHOLARSHIP

GCPMA has been proud to award scholarships to students who are involved in the pest control industry OR whose parents/guardians are employed by a GCPMA member company. The GCPMA Scholarship Committee has reviewed all completed applications.

CONGRATULATIONS

Liam Tumminello

Funding for these Scholarships is provided by our great Vendors and committed members that represent nearly all sectors of the pest control industry. GCPMA Leadership and membership have a commitment to support the intellectual development of the nation's scholastically talented youth.



Luke Rambo, owner, and Chris Somers, service manager
of Rambo Total Pest Control

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