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Kudzu Bug  
*Megacopta cribraria* (Heteroptera: Plataspidae)

*Megacopta cribraria* is commonly called the kudzu bug, bean plataspid, lablab bug and the globular stink bug. It was first discovered in northeast Georgia in October 2009, following reports from homeowners of large aggregations of the insect on residential structures. Details about when and where this insect was introduced to the United States are unknown, although it is noted that since the first report of *M. cribraria* in 2009, its spread throughout the southeastern states has been rapid. Adult *M. cribraria* are active, strong fliers and fly readily when disturbed, which may account for the rapid dispersal of this pest. The extent of *M. cribraria*’s eventual spread not yet known, however, the large populations and invasive behavior of these insects make them an important emerging nuisance pest.

**WHAT ARE OUR OPTIONS FOR DEALING WITH TICKS?**

Ronald D. Harrison, Ph.D., Orkin Pest Control

The Centers for Disease Control (CDC) in Atlanta indicates ticks are the number one arthropod transmitter of disease in the United States. Pest control professionals have two options when it comes to helping customers reduce their exposure to ticks: reduce the number of animals that are introducing ticks to the landscape or target the tick habitat with products that will reduce their population.

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Our new NPMA Management Institute is designed to offer smart solutions for your business. Sponsored by BASF Pest Control Solutions, this program will help you learn how to identify the best targets of opportunity, avoid brutal head-to-head price competition, price effectively to improve profitability without sacrificing unit volume; improve the focus, effectiveness, and efficiency of your total go-to-market activities including e-commerce and traditional approaches; and ultimately sell better and faster.

The NPMA Pest Academy is composed of three in-depth, three-hour sessions that will cover more than just the “basics” and will focus on the details of biology, behavior and the intricacies involved in successfully managing rodents, ants, and termites in the field.

Once again, we are pleased to offer the NPMA Bed Bug Symposium, where attendees will receive the most current research, legal issues, and technologies and strategies adopted by the industry across the globe.

Additionally, we will be bringing back our Thought Leader series, where renowned experts will touch on topics such as succession planning, social media, and sales and marketing. And, to round things out, we have designed Technicians’ Days—one for residential technicians and one for commercial technicians—and Small Business Saturday, offering topics specific to small business owners and managers.

And, on top of all of this, you will have the tried-and-true experience of PestWorld, including general session speakers Kyle Maynard, Paul Begala and Michael Murphy, and the PestWorld Exhibit Hall, the heart of the convention and this year’s single largest, industry-related trade show floor. With more than 150 leading vendors showcasing the latest products and services, exhibitors will show you their new products, explain current techniques, and demonstrate solutions to benefit small, mid-sized, and large pest management companies, as well as government employees and university researchers.

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THE CENTERS FOR DISEASE CONTROL (CDC) IN ATLANTA INDICATES TICKS ARE THE NUMBER ONE ARTHROPOD TRANSMITTER OF DISEASE IN THE UNITED STATES.

BY RONALD D. HARRISON, PH.D., ORKIN PEST CONTROL

WHAT ARE OUR OPTIONS FOR DEALING WITH TICKS?
The diseases transmitted by ticks which cause most concern are Lyme disease in the Northeast and upper Midwest and Rocky Mountain spotted fever in the southern part of the U.S. The CDC also notes that in 2010 over 40,000 cases of Lyme disease were reported and that this number would probably be doubled if all cases were reported.

Ticks appear to be infected by small mammals they bite. Ixodes scapularis (Blacklegged deer) is the major vector of Lyme disease in the U.S. About 20–40 percent of ticks carry Lyme borreliosis. Newly hatched ticks seem to be the major transmitter of the disease. Unfortunately, most people diagnosed with Lyme disease do not recall a tick biting them.

Disease transmission to humans usually occurs after a tick has been attached for over 24 hours. Besides the disease risk associated with ticks, tick bites on humans and pets can be painful and can cause permanent marks.

Pest control professionals have two options when it comes to helping customers reduce their exposure to ticks:

1. Reduce the number of animals that are introducing ticks to the landscape. Controlling the population of smaller mammals such as rodents will help limit the amount of Lyme borreliosis being introduced; and controlling the population of larger mammals, such as deer, can help reduce the number of larger ticks perpetuating their two-year life cycle.

2. Target the tick habitat with products that will reduce their population.

Reducing vertebrate populations can be difficult. Commensal rodents such as roof rats, house mice and Norway rats are not the major introducers of ticks and Lyme disease into the environment. Instead, rodents such as white-footed mice and deer mice are more likely sources, and current rodenticide labels do not specify use for these animals. No good repellents for them are on the market, and trapping for them outside is problematic. Although some very good repellents for deer and other larger vertebrates exist, they often do not last longer than 30 days, and treating an entire yard to ensure repellency can be expensive and time consuming.

Ticks themselves are controlled well with products such as pyrethroids. However, because tick-carrying animals constantly introduce new ticks into an outdoor area, pesticide treatments need to be repeated over the spring, summer and fall seasons. Ticks usually are not active over the colder winter season. However, tick activity did not completely disappear during the 2010–2011 winter seasons, and significant numbers of ticks started appearing one to two months earlier than typical in the spring of 2011.

The CDC produced some interesting results in pyrethroids and tick control research done in the 1990s and 2000s. A one-time tick treatment in the late spring can reduce tick populations up to 95 percent in a residential environment. CDC’s work was done in the Northeast, but the research model has been tried in the southern part of the United States for other species of ticks as well with apparent success. A major component of successful tick control is to ensure that ticks common to the particular area are treated.

The ecotone area is critical. The ecotone area for tick control is considered to be the interface between the well-cut grass and the less manicured shrub/ grass area. Treating the ecotone areas for ticks would require spraying 10 feet into the grass and 20 feet into the shrubby area with a pyrethroid, ensuring that the product is forced into the grass thatch, litter and mulch under the shrubs. Applying product higher than 3–4 feet up is not necessary, since this is the area
that ticks are hatching from and moving around in. Power sprayers are more effective for this purpose than hand pump-up units. The pyrethroid should be effective for one to two months.

It is important that pest control professionals take precautions when treating for ticks. Permethrin-treated clothing is available. The active ingredient in the clothes will remain effective for several washings. Products that act as a repellent to ticks can also be applied to clothing and skin. It is also recommended that, immediately upon returning home after a treatment, pest control professionals launder and dry their clothing and shower. Data indicate that those who shower after outdoor activity in areas infested by ticks have a lower risk of tick bites. After showering, the pest control professional should perform a tick inspection on himself. Since ticks may be biting in areas that are hard for the individual to see himself, it is helpful to have a “buddy” help with the inspection if someone is available. If a tick has attached itself, it can be removed by using tweezers to pull the tick’s head away from your skin.

Can the control of ticks in the environment really lead to a reduction in Lyme disease transmission to people? The Centers for Disease Control is looking at this question. Working with Orkin they have developed a study to treat hundreds of homes in the Northeast with a pyrethroid or a placebo and determine if there is a correlation between treatment and Lyme disease transmission. The test started in 2010 and is continuing through 2011. Results of the study should be available late this year or early next year.

TICKS ARE DISEASE-CARRYING, LIFE-THREATENING PESTS FOR WHICH THE PEST CONTROL INDUSTRY CAN AND SHOULD PROVIDE CONTROL METHODS.
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■ Participate in our new Pest Academy, showcasing in-depth, three hour sessions will cover more than just the “basics” and will focus on the details of biology, behavior and the intricacies involved in successful managing these pests in the field.

■ Receive focused education in hard-hitting topics such as Sales and Marketing, Social Media, Employee Management, and Customer Service in our extended Thought Leaders sessions.

■ Have access to business management education from a Harvard business professor through our NPMA Management Institute.

■ Receive targeted training during our new Small Business Saturday and Technicians’ Day programs.

■ Network with more than 3,000 other pest management professionals, researchers and vendors from around the world.

■ Earn valuable recertification credits at more than 100 hours of educational sessions led by world-renowned experts.

■ Find solutions for your business in the largest pest management industry trade show in the world, showcasing the newest products, services, and technologies in pest management.

■ Discover the latest business trends and learn how to apply these innovative ideas into your business.

This year, NPMA is pleased to announce several brand new features at PestWorld, all designed to enhance your experience.
NPMA MANAGEMENT INSTITUTE
Smart Solutions for Business

Sponsored by BASF Pest Control Solutions

Our new NPMA Management Institute is designed to offer smart solutions for your business. Sponsored by BASF Pest Control Solutions and led by noted Harvard Professor Benson Shapiro, this program will help you learn how to identify the best targets of opportunity, avoid brutal head-to-head price competition, price effectively to improve profitability without sacrificing unit volume; improve the focus, effectiveness, and efficiency of your total go-to-market activities including e-commerce and traditional approaches; and ultimately sell better and faster. Please note: Additional registration fee is required for this course.

NPMA PEST ACADEMY

- **Rodent Academy**
  Dr. Bobby Corrigan, one of the foremost authorities on urban rodent control, will convey the details of rodent biology and behavior that you need to know to control rodents in today’s pest management marketplace. By understanding how rodents behave and what motivates them, you will leave the academy ready to tackle the toughest rodent jobs with confidence.

- **Ant Academy**
  As an expert in structure infesting ants, Dr. Karen Vail will provide attendees with the knowledge and understanding of the major pest species that is needed to successfully develop integrated ant management programs. In addition to the major pest species like odorous house ants, argentine ants, pavement ants, additional regionally important ants will be covered. Detailed topics including: ant biology, identification, behavior, and treatment tips will be covered in this in-depth, one of a kind session.
Termite Academy
In her unique and approachable style, Dr. Faith Oi will present the “complete picture” regarding termite control. The session will incorporate the biological and behavioral information about termites that professionals need as well as the practical, “boots on the ground” information about termite control methods that is needed to develop successful termite management programs.

NEW SMALL BUSINESS SATURDAY
Over 85 percent of NPMA’s members are considered small businesses, as defined by the U.S. Small Business Administration. As such, NPMA has created Small Business Saturday, during which we will offer educational programs to help you navigate the issues you face as a small business manager.

Sessions Include:
Zero to a Million—RIGHT NOW!, a tell all, reveal all-journey for small business PMP’s who possess the passion and will to take their business to their first million milestone.
Profit Robbers, a panel presentation offering insights on how to reduce spending in the areas of employee expenses, labor costs, overtime while you increase your production.
Profit Angels, a session designed to help you decide if adding a new service line within your organization will be a smart way to be successful in the future.

NEW TECHNICIANS’ DAYS
Technicians’ Days offer focused sessions designed to provide your techs the training they need...without spending too much time out of the office or away from the family.

Residential Technicians’ Day—Friday, October 19
Sessions Include:
- Phorid Flies: Real-World Solutions from the Field
- Silverfish, House Centipedes and Springtails: Avoiding Treatment Headaches and Potential Customer Concerns
- Cockroaches: 12 Reasons for Bait Failure

Commercial Technicians’ Day—Saturday, October 20
Sessions Include:
- Getting The Most Out Of Your Monitoring Traps
- Post-Application Inspections: Using Insecticides as a Monitoring Tool in Food Processing Plants
- Unlocking the Mysteries of Insect Growth Regulators

BED BUG SYMPOSIUM
Once again, we are pleased to offer the NPMA Bed Bug Symposium, where attendees will receive the most current research, legal issues, and technologies and strategies adopted by the industry across the globe.

Legal Review of Existing Case Law and What It Means For The Pest Management Industry
Learn about the important bed bug legal cases from an expert in bed bug litigation. Based on this expert analysis, you will come away from this informative session with a better understanding how to protect your company as well as your client’s reputation.

Experts Reveal What PMPs Need to Know About Legal Cases Involving Bed Bugs
No pest management firm wants “on the job training” when it come to legal and liability concerns. In this must see panel discussion, find out what the entomological experts have learned based on their experiences in real-life bed bug legal cases, so that you can avoid problems in the future.

Global Perspectives on Bed Bug Best Management Practices
As everyone knows by now, there has been a global resurgence in bed bugs...worse in some places than others. Among the earliest victims were the British, the Australians and the U.S. This session will explore the different approaches, technologies and strategies adopted by the industry in these far flung locales.....presented by PMPs with real experience coping with the issue.

And, on top of all of this, you will have the tried-and-true experience of the PestWorld Exhibit Hall, the heart of the convention and this year’s single largest, industry-related trade show floor. With more than 150 leading vendors showcasing the latest products and services, exhibitors will show you their new products, explain current techniques, and demonstrate solutions to benefit small, mid-sized, and large pest management companies, as well as government employees and university researchers.

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Introduction

*Megacopta cribraria* is commonly called the kudzu bug, bean plataspid, lablab bug and the globular stink bug. It was first discovered in northeast Georgia in October 2009, following reports from homeowners of large aggregations of the insect on residential structures. Onsite inspections by University of Georgia personnel revealed large populations of the insect in nearby kudzu stands. *M. cribraria* had not been previously reported in the Western Hemisphere, in fact this is the first member of the family Plataspidae reported in the United States.

In its native range, kudzu is a preferred host plant, but *M. cribraria* also feeds on numerous economically important legume (bean) crops including soybeans, of which it is considered a serious pest. *M. cribraria* feeds by piercing stems, petioles and leaves of the host plants with its needle-like mouthparts to extract plant juices. There is also a concern that this pest could become a pest in Georgia’s peanut crop, which is worth approximately $2 billion a year.

Figure 1. *M. cribraria* on window trim (D. Suiter, University of Georgia)
Kudzu is an exotic invasive vine that was imported from Asia more than 100 years ago. The vine is commonly found through the southeastern United States and is characterized by dense mats of vines and roots. Although originally introduced as a forage crop and to help control erosion, the plant quickly outcompetes native vegetation and grows unimpeded throughout most of its range. *M. cribraria* feeding has been shown to reduce kudzu biomass in the field by more than 30 percent.

**Description**

*M. cribraria* adults are light brown to olive green in color with numerous dark brown speckles. The adults range from 4–6 mm in length and are rounded to slightly oblong in shape. Adults possess an enlarged scutellum that is widest posteriorly and broadly truncate. Like all true bugs, they have piercing-sucking mouthparts. Similar to stink bugs, *M. cribraria* produces a mildly offensive odor when handled or disturbed.

*M. cribraria* can be distinguished from related insects in the United States by having two-segmented tarsi, and enlarged scutellum (a triangular plate on the dorsal side of the thorax, usually where the wings attach) that is widest at the posterior margin and relatively truncate posteriorly. Other members of the North American Pentatomoidea exhibiting enlarged scutelli include the Scutelleridae, Thyreocoridae, Pentatomidae: Asopinae and Podopinae. These groups have three-segmented tarsi and a more narrowly rounded scutellum posteriorly compared to *M. cribraria*.

**Distribution**

A native of Asia, *Megacopta* spp. have been reported from Australia, China, India, Indonesia, Japan, Korea, Macao, Malaysia, Myanmar, New Caledonia, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Taiwan, Thailand and Vietnam. Currently, *M. cribraria* is established throughout Georgia and South Carolina, much of North Carolina, eastern Alabama and at least one county in southwestern and one county in southeastern Virginia. Details about when and where

![Figure 2. *M. cribraria* distribution 2009 - 2012 (W.A. Gardner, University of Georgia)](image-url)
this insect was introduced to the United States are unknown, although it is noted that since the first report of *M. cribraria* in 2009, its spread throughout the southeastern states has been rapid. Adult *M. cribraria* are active, strong fliers and fly readily when disturbed, which may account for the rapid dispersal of this pest. The extent of *M. cribraria*’s eventual spread not yet known. *M. cribraria* is can feed on alternate hosts such as soybean, but overwintering adults feed on existing kudzu plants in the spring before soybeans are planted, so expansion beyond the southeastern United States (where kudzu is available as an initial food source) is still unknown.

**Biology**

Overwintering adults lay small (<1 mm length) barrel shaped eggs on new vine growth of kudzu plants from mid-April to early May. Freshly laid eggs are white, but soon develop an off-white or pinkish color. The operculum (the hatch through which nymphs emerge from the eggs) is surrounded by short spine-like projections. Eggs are typically laid in groups of two or three parallel rows. On average, each egg mass contains approximately 15 eggs.

*M. cribraria* exhibits an unusual behavior related to the symbiotic bacteria in its gut. Before laying eggs the female deposits particles of her gut microorganisms, which the first instar nymphs eat upon hatching. Nymphs that did not receive this inoculation of symbiotic gut bacteria exhibit slower growth, smaller body sizes and higher levels of mortality.

*M. cribraria* undergoes five nymphal instars and two generations each year, with egg laying activity peaking in spring and early summer. (In its native range, *M. cribraria* is reported to have two or three generations per year.) In the southeastern United States, adult kudzu bugs overwinter near kudzu patches and soybean fields, in plant debris, behind tree bark and other protected places.

**Pest Status**

Similar to other overwintering pests like brown marmorated stink bugs and multicolored Asian ladybeetle, kudzu bugs are attracted in large numbers to structures and may be observed aggregating on the south-facing sides of buildings in the autumn. These aggregations can become quite large, with thousands of bugs alighting on building surfaces, which often prompts calls to pest management professionals. USDA Forest Service research performed in Georgia indicates that light-colored traps are more effective at capturing kudzu bugs in the field. However, it is not clear if kudzu bugs prefer light-colored houses over darker houses as overwintering sites. Bugs do seem to prefer light colored surfaces, even on dark-colored structures. As cooler weather approaches, kudzu bugs seek out protected harborage to overwinter. It is not clear to what extent *M. cribraria* will enter structures; however, it is evident that the large numbers of bugs on the exteriors are a nuisance to homeowners. The large populations and invasive behavior of these insects make them an important emerging nuisance pest.

**IPM Measures**

Kudzu bugs can be managed with the use of a vacuum to remove large aggregations of invading bugs. Bags from vacuums should be disposed of outside to prevent bugs from escaping and reinesting the structure. Although it is not yet clear to what extent *M. cribraria* will enter structures, exclusion efforts are a commonsense approach that will have the added benefit of keeping other invading overwintering pests outdoors too. Mechanical exclusion, although labor intensive, is often the best method for keeping overwintering pests from entering a structure. Seal cracks and crevices around windows and door trim, and repair or install vent screening in soffits and gables. Exclusion is best performed in the late spring or summer. Late fall or winter exclusion efforts can trap pests inside the structure, causing them to emerge into living spaces.

Inside the structure, seal around windows, doors, baseboards, exhaust fans, ceiling lights and other potential entry points with caulk or other suitable sealant to keep bugs from entering the living spaces. It should
be noted that although applications to void spaces may help control overwintering kudzu bugs inside walls, secondary infestations of carpet beetles, feeding on the dead bugs may occur and become a nuisance.

Exterior applications of insecticides can be made according to label instructions. Focus efforts on the likely resting places including around windows and doors, and under soffits and eaves. Since kudzu bugs migrate from host plants to overwintering sites over multiple weeks, it may be difficult to time treatments to coincide with the arrival of overwintering bugs. *M. cribraria* does seem to prefer light-colored surfaces (even on dark-colored structures), so spot treatments with an appropriately labeled insecticide may help with control. Since extremely large populations of kudzu bugs can develop in nearby kudzu stands, sustained control is difficult unless the host plants can be eliminated.

References


Figure 3. *M. cribraria* aggregation on fascia along rooffine (D. Suiter, University of Georgia)
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**Q** We have a customer that is seeking pest control credits toward LEED Certification, but I’ve heard that the requirements are being revised. Can you shed some light on this?

**A** As you are probably aware, the United States Green Building Council (USGBC), the organization that administers the LEED program for new and existing buildings, has a provision that provides points to pest management companies who provide IPM services in accordance with their program standards. Historically, the standards have been confusing and difficult for PMPs to comply with and have not given clear guidance for Accredited Professionals (AP) who approve your IPM plans. This has created inconsistencies in LEED buildings in the acceptance of IPM plans by the APs.

LEED is now in the process of developing its 2012 revisions to the standards and has recently completed a public comment period on the third draft revision. After years of working to amend the LEED standards, we are pleased that NPMA staff was provided an opportunity to advise and submit draft language to USGBC on how to amend their standards and more clearly outline what is required to earn points towards the LEED certification (which, by the way, will double in the new version). This was done in coordination with EPA and ASPCRO. Though the draft does not contain 100 percent of NPMA’s recommendations, we believe that it is significant improvement over the existing language, making it much more practical and easy to comply with.

The USGBC is currently incorporating stakeholder comments into a fourth draft which will open for public comment in May. Final voting and adoption of the standards are anticipated this summer and the new LEED 2012 program is scheduled to launch in November 2012.

**Q** I want to ensure that I am applying the correct amount of termicide when I am performing a conventional termite job, but I’m unable to invest in a digital flow meter. What’s the best way to make sure I’m applying the correct amount?

**A** In order to know how much termicide has been applied, you must determine the flow rate. In order to do this, you will need a five-gallon bucket, a one gallon milk jug, a permanent marker and a stopwatch. First, measure one gallon of water with the milk jug and dump it into the five-gallon bucket. Mark the one gallon level in the bucket with the permanent marker. Next, discard the water and start your termite rig. Using a stopwatch, record the amount of time it takes to fill the bucket to the one-gallon mark. Now you know how long it takes to pump one gallon of termicide, but be careful, this time is only good for the treatment tool and tip that was used during the test. If you change tools, tips, hose lengths or diameters, the flow rate will change. It is a good idea to determine the flow rate of your equipment on a daily basis as part of your initial equipment inspection and start-up process. Once you know the rate at which your termite rig and treatment tools are delivering termicide, you can use a wristwatch to determine the volume applied. For instance, if you need to pump four gallons of termicide and you have determined your flow rate is one gallon per minute, treat for four minutes to deliver the correct amount of product to the treatment site.

**Q** With the recent changes to rodenticide labels, what should I do to make sure that my firm is in compliance?

**A** Here are four important tips to make sure that you are in compliance with the new label recommendations.

1. Read and follow all label instructions
   First and foremost, read and follow all label instructions. The label on the product being applied must be followed regardless of what other labels may say.

2. Understand what products have the new labeling
   During the transition period, products with different label instructions may be shipped through
distribution to pest management professionals. As such, the products on your truck or in your storage room may have two (or three) completely different use directions. Double check the label before every use to ensure that the product you are using has the correct label for the job.

3. Retrain technicians / Update service protocols
Review the label changes with technicians and help them determine how the new directions for use might impact the way they apply rodenticides. In some cases, company treatment protocols might be in conflict with the label instructions of the products a technician is using. Take the time to review and update treatment protocols and remind technicians that when there is a conflict, always follow label instructions.

4. Carefully manage existing stocks
Many pest management professionals ask if there is a deadline, by which all “old label” products must be used. The answer to this question is no. It is not advisable however, to keep rodenticides in inventory for extended periods of time, as palatability may be affected if products go “stale”. With all of this in mind, supervisors should carefully manage existing stocks to make sure that technicians are using the appropriate product for the job.

Q Can NPMA entomologists help me identify pests for my clients? What is the best way to send insect samples to NPMA’s entomologists for identification?

A Identification is the key to effective pest management. Once a pest is properly identified, its food preferences, harborage sites, behavioral patterns, biology, habits, potential for damage and options for control measures can be determined. Whether specimens are brought back to the office or sent away for identification, care must be taken to ensure that the specimen remains intact. Another important piece of information that is critical to the identification process is submitting information detailing when and where the specimen was found, what it was doing and the name of the collector.

Most pests can be identified in the field or in the office with a few simple tools and basic reference materials like the NPMA Field Guide to Structural Pests, (available online at the NPMA BugStore). NPMA entomologists can also offer identification assistance to member companies if needed. To facilitate accurate identification, the following collection and shipment techniques should be used along with the attached nest identification request form.

Care must be taken in capturing and preserving specimens prior to sending them for identification. By following these steps, accurate and timely identifications can be made.

1. Provide your field personnel with individual containers for collections. Containers such as vials should be sturdy and fitted with tightly sealed caps.
2. When submitting different types of specimens (e.g., a small-sized beetle and an ant) place the specimens into separate containers and completely label each vial with company name and vial number.
3. Send more than one specimen or different life stages of the same species whenever possible.
4. Place specimen into a plastic bottle or vial, fill the container with 70% alcohol, replace the cap and secure with tape.
5. Place moths and butterflies between layers of wax paper if unable to place in a vial.
6. If specimens are adhered to a glue board, protect the glue board from contacting other surfaces. Pack the glue board securely for shipment.
7. Complete the specimen submittal form available at: http://www.npmapestworld.org/techresources/resources.cfm
8. After ensuring that all vials, bags or bottles are completely labeled, place containers and submittal form in a mailing tube or sturdy box, with plenty of material for cushioning, and tape securely for mailing.
9. Whenever possible, mail specimens first class or overnight delivery.

Accurate identifications can be made when care is taken to properly collect and ship specimens. When specimens are received in poor condition or background data is incomplete, efforts to properly identify specimens are hindered. Under these circumstances a request for additional specimens may be necessary prior to identification. Incorporating the suggested steps for collection and completion of the pest identification request form will promote accurate and timely pest identification. ☂
SHOULD YOUR COMPANY BE “PINNING?”
PINTEREST: TODAY’S FASTEST GROWING SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORM

BY MISSY HENRIKSEN
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, PPMA

Just when you thought your business had a handle on social media by joining Facebook, Twitter, and LinkedIn, a new platform comes along that has everyone buzzing all over again. Today’s latest and greatest technology: Pinterest, a digital pinboard that allows users to collect and share photos found on the Web by “pinning” them to customizable, themed boards. Other users can follow you, view your content and either “like it” or “repin it” to their own profiles.

Since debuting more than a year ago, Pinterest has experienced massive growth and popularity. The website hit 11.7 million unique monthly visitors in January 2012, making it the fastest standalone site in history to pass the 10 million users mark, according to comScore, a company specializing in digital marketing intelligence. As a result, marketers cannot afford to overlook the power of Pinterest and are now evaluating how they can best use this platform to reach customers and promote their brands.

The Benefits of Pinterest
Pinterest has proven to be a useful tool in helping businesses big and small to expand online communications and build brands. And according to Experian Hitwise, Pinterest is now the third most popular social network in the United States behind only Facebook and Twitter, and the site is continuing to grow at a rapid rate.

Intrigued? So how can Pinterest help improve your online marketing communications?

Drive Traffic to Your Site: Every image pinned on Pinterest retains the URL of its original source, linking back to that specific page when clicked by a user. This helps drive traffic directly to your website, improves the visibility of your brand and helps to boost SEO results. According to Shareaholic, Pinterest generates nearly four percent of referral traffic to participating websites—more than Google Plus, LinkedIn and YouTube combined.

One way to maximize referral traffic is by adding an image gallery to your company’s website and pinning photos directly from it. This will ensure that the traffic is directed to your site rather than somewhere else.

Customer Interaction: Pinterest allows businesses to interact with current and potential customers through “liking,” “repinning” and commenting on photos. In addition, you can use hashtags, similar to Twitter, and tag other Pinterest users in your pins by using the @username in content descriptions. This is a great way to network with users and engage your audience.

The use of Pinterest has already proven successful for some pest control companies. Take the case of an NPMA member in Port Saint Lucie, Fla., who is using this very practical marketing tool to pin images of insects, pest facts and prevention tips, to name a few. The company has pinned more than 400 images and has received almost 100 likes from other users.

Provide Exclusive Deals: Offering Pinterest-exclusive deals can help increase your online presence and give a value-added bonus to your followers. You can pin a printable coupon or a QR code that directs your followers to a discount on a specific service when the code is scanned.

How to Start Pinning
Unlike other social media sites, Pinterest requires prospective users to request an invitation. Although
this may initially deter you from signing up, the process is extremely simple. You can request an invite on the website, www.pinterest.com, or ask someone who is already a part of Pinterest to send you one. Here are some steps to follow after receiving an invite:

1. **Connect with your Facebook or Twitter account.** Once you receive an invite, you will be prompted to register an account via Facebook or Twitter.
2. **Edit your profile.** Add your company name, description, logo and a link to your website.
3. **Install the “Pin It” button.** Drag the “Pin It” button to your Bookmarks bar. Once installed in your browser, this button enables you to easily add photos to your pinboards from any website.
4. **Create Pinboards.** Click the “Add” button on your Pinterest navigation bar to create a new...According to Experian Hitwise, Pinterest is now the third most popular social network in the United States behind only Facebook and Twitter, and the site is continuing to grow at a rapid rate.

![What's All the Buzz?](image)

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5 BRANDS THAT SUCCESSFULLY PIN:

1. **Whole Foods Market** is a good example of a brand that is always looking for new users to follow and re-pins content on a regular basis. [http://pinterest.com/wholefoods/](http://pinterest.com/wholefoods/)

2. Fashion brand **GUESS** found a creative way to engage followers by hosting a successful contest on Pinterest where fans created pinboards based on four colors to promote the spring collection. [http://pinterest.com/guessinc/](http://pinterest.com/guessinc/)

3. **Mashable** has seen recent success by pinning less visual content that still appeals to the general Pinterest audience such as web humor, infographics and social media tips. [http://pinterest.com/mashable/](http://pinterest.com/mashable/)

4. **Better Homes & Gardens** does a great job of cross promoting their presence on Pinterest by sending out tweets of pins and encouraging people to repin a specific image that is called out on the homepage of their web site. [http://pinterest.com/bhg/](http://pinterest.com/bhg/)

5. The high-end retailer, **Nordstrom**, has gained more than a few followers by creating relevant and timely pinboards that change with the seasons including spring weddings, prom inspirations and Valentine’s Day gifts. [http://pinterest.com/nordstrom/](http://pinterest.com/nordstrom/)

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**Tips for a Successful Pinning Experience**

Like many other social media platforms, Pinterest is a great tool for indirect marketing purposes. The visual appeal of the web site offers a variety of opportunities for pest management companies to connect with customers in an effort to boost sales. However, there are a few key tips to keep in mind for a successful pinning experience.

**Spend the Time:** Pinterest requires an investment in time and if you decide to use it as a marketing tool for your business, it is important to take advantage of all it has to offer. Spend a few minutes each day pinning new content and looking at what your followers are pinning for inspiration. To get the most visibility for your pins, connect your Pinterest account to other social media sites and add the “Follow Me on Pinterest” button to your website in an effort to increase followers.

**Provide High-Quality Content:** Providing high-quality content on Pinterest will boost the reputation of your brand, which will in turn, attract more attention from your followers. Pin fresh content that is relevant and useful to your target audience such as pest prevention tips or photos of bugs that frequent your geographical area. Also, make sure the photos being pinned are clear and visually appealing.

**Add Variety:** Users have the ability to promote more than just the products or services that their business sells. For example, pest professionals can pin pest facts, bug photography or current industry news to share with their followers. In addition, Pinterest recently added a new feature that enables users to pin videos. Create a pinboard that features news clips or videos from YouTube, which will add more depth to your content.
**Promote Your Presence:** Existing social media sites still have one advantage over Pinterest—the number of users. As a result, it is important to cross-promote your presence on Pinterest using other social networks such as Facebook, Twitter or Tumblr. You can even write a blog to share with your followers when new content is pinned.

**Follow, Follow, Follow:** In order to increase your presence on Pinterest, it is necessary to follow others. Start following the powerhouse users with thousand of unique subscribers and repin some of their content. This is a great way to add a non-promotional dynamic to your collection of pins.

**The Bottom Line:**

The social media space is constantly expanding and evolving, and it can become easily overwhelming for businesses to keep up with new trends. Therefore, before committing to another social media site like Pinterest, you should study the new platform carefully and evaluate it against your marketing objectives and target audiences. If you are still unsure if Pinterest is a good fit for your business, invest some time to set up an account and start pinning. If it becomes a referral source to your website, helps you engage in online dialogue with potential customers, and helps you leverage pins and add content to your other social media profiles, then Pinterest will work for you and your company.

Providing high-quality content on Pinterest will boost the reputation of your brand, which will in turn, attract more attention from your followers.
NPMA recently announced the results of its annual board elections.

Laura Simpson (Dugas Pest Control of Baton Rouge, Inc., Baton Rouge, La.) will serve as President.

Kevin Pass (Action Pest Control, Evansville, Ind.) will serve as Vice President.

William Tesh (Pest Management Systems, Inc., Greensboro, N.C.) will serve as Treasurer.

H. Russell Ives (Rose Pest Solutions, Troy, Mich.) will serve as Secretary.

I am pleased to be selected as the association president by my industry peers. I look forward to working with my colleagues to continue to promote the general interest and welfare of the pest management industry, as well as reinforce the value of pest management in protecting public health and property.”

— Laura Simpson

New members of the Board of Directors include:

Past President Representative: Michael Rottler (Rotter Pest & Lawn Solutions, St. Louis, Mo.)

At Large Director: Todd Leyse (ADAM’S Pest Control, Inc., Hamel, Minn.)

At Large Director: Brent Boles (Schendel Services, Topeka, Kansas)

At Large Director: Justin McCauley (McCauley Services, Benton, Ark.)

At Large Director: J. Bryan Cooksey III (McCall Service, Inc., Jacksonville, Fla.)

Region 2 Director: Scott Eubanks (Northwest Exterminating, Marietta, Ga.)

At Large Director: Scott Fortson (Terminix Service, Inc., Columbia, S.C.)

Region 3 Director: Sean Bergmann (United Pest Solutions, Seattle, Wash.)

NPMA is delighted to welcome our newly elected Board and Executive Committee. We are fortunate to have excellent leaders who will work together to encourage high levels of competence, knowledge and performance in the industry.”

—Rob Lederer, NPMA Executive Vice President
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After a warm winter across the U.S. and on the heels of a market up-turn, many industry employers are in “hire” mode, hoping to attract and employ talented candidates. If there’s one lesson employers have learned over the past four years, it’s the value of the philosophy, “Hire Hard, Manage Easy.” Today, more than ever before, to meet customer demands, profit margins, and productivity goals, you must surround yourself with the right people.

This year, as you gear up for the season, why not take the time to better prepare for your interviewing and hiring? There’s too much at risk to take chances. With every hire, you put your company, your customers, your reputation, your vehicles and, perhaps, your life-savings on the line. Just one effective interview question, in-depth form, or extra ounce of effort in the hiring process can make a difference.

Before you begin interviewing, evaluate your hiring process and make sure it’s up to speed with legal and effective forms. Remember, your job is to become an “investigator” during the interview, and the tools you use should make this task easier! Nondiscriminatory and job-related questions that elicit more than just a “yes” or “no” response will help. To get you started, here’s a list of our favorite and most popular interview questions for non-management candidates. Try a few! You might be surprised by the results.

1. What three adjectives best describe you? Tell me about each.
2. What types of people do you find it difficult to get along with? Why?
3. Which of your traits and characteristics do you find most frustrating?
4. Tell me about the best/worst boss you ever had.
5. For the worst boss, what did you do to improve the situation?
6. How were you able to stay so long at your previous job? or Why such a short time?
7. How long do you plan on working here?
8. What is most important to you in a work environment?
9. Did you have responsibilities at home as a child? Tell me about them.
10. When did you start working? Did you volunteer while in school or work summer jobs?
11. Tell me how your responsibilities have increased in your previous three positions.
12. What is your biggest professional accomplishment?
13. What is least appealing to you about this job? Why?
14. Why do you want to work here?
15. How many hours a week are you accustomed to working?
16. Tell me about your grades in school.
17. Tell me about a time when you had a major conflict with another employee or manager. What was the cause? What did you do to resolve the problem?
18. Explain your understanding of this job’s responsibilities.
19. What can you do for us that someone else can’t do?
20. Give me an example of a time that you compromised one of your most basic principles and it backfired on you.
21. What beliefs do you hold deeply as a result of your early life experiences?
22. What plans do you have for self-improvement and personal development?
23. What kinds of things do you learn quickly? What kinds of things do you find it difficult to learn?
24. How do you feel about change? Tell me about large-scale changes that you have faced and how you handled each.
25. How do you plan your day?
26. Tell me about a complex problem you have had to solve. Who did you turn to and how did you solve it?
27. Tell me about your pay history. (Discuss starting pay, raises, commissions, bonuses, expectations, needs, etc.)
28. What are your short- and long-term professional goals?
29. What is your philosophy of customer service? Where did you learn it?
30. Tell me about your worst customer service dilemma and how you overcame it.

Wow! With all these questions, it will be hard to violate the 80/20 rule of interviewing! (Listen 80% of the time; talk 20% of the time.) Keep in mind; however, that there is no substitute for questions that relate to the candidate’s specific experiences, profile, skills, and knowledge. To enhance your chances of a successful hire, start by determining precisely who and what you are looking for (develop a profile); then study the background of the candidate before the interview, and prepare targeted interview questions. Add a comprehensive, legally sound, and effective process, plus ample time, and you have the formula to identify a winner!

Jean Seawright is NPMA’s HR Consultant. She is president of Seawright & Associates, an HR management consulting firm located in Winter Park, Florida. Since 1987, Jean has provided human resource management and compliance advice to employers across the country. She can be contacted at 407-645-2433 or jseawright@seawright.com.

If there’s one lesson employers have learned over the past four years, it’s the value of the philosophy, “Hire Hard, Manage Easy.”
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**CALENDAR OF EVENTS**

**JULY 19–21**

**ACADEMY 2012**
Tucson, Arizona

**JULY 26–28**

**MID-ATLANTIC/CAROLINAS SUMMER CONFERENCE**
Hilton Head Island, South Carolina

**OCTOBER 17–20**

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