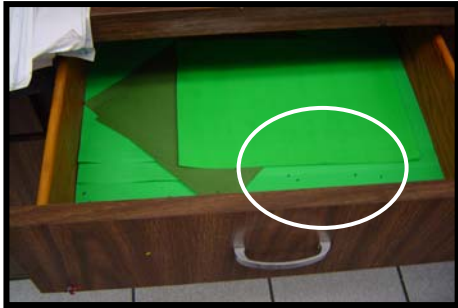
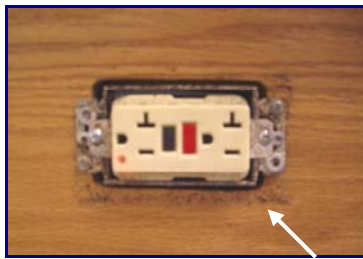




Topic of the Month Sanitation



German Cockroach droppings in a supply drawer.



German cockroach fecal smears around an electrical outlet.



American cockroach droppings in drawer.

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It is that time of year. It’s time to clean out the classroom and get ready for summer. Ah, summer! Before you hit the beach, let’s take some time to think about sanitation. When you close up the classroom, make sure that you don’t leave behind a picnic for pests.

The pests we generally see in schools include cockroaches, mice, spiders, ants, silverfish, and occasionally crickets. These pests are animals and they like the same things we do, food, water, harborage and safety. Summertime is a great time for these pests to proliferate.

Places that provide the necessities for pest survival are what we term pest vulnerable areas (PVA). Each of these areas should be thoroughly inspected and cleaned during the summer break. Areas that need special attention include the kitchen and cafeteria, faculty lounge, custodial storage areas, science classrooms, art centers, special needs classrooms, kindergarten and daycare classrooms, locker rooms, home economics classrooms and other reported pest “hot spots.”

The kitchen and cafeteria will require some deep cleaning. Floor drains should be scrubbed and all equipment and floors, especially corners and around furniture legs, should be degreased. Don’t forget that walls and light fixtures should also be cleaned.

In the teacher’s lounge, check refrigerator seals, clean inside and under the microwave, behind and around soda machines and under sinks. These are excellent places to harbor pests. Also, be sure to clean any pest droppings you find. Droppings are difficult to age, and the pest manager won’t be able to conclude whether the infestation is old or new, unless they know that the area has been thoroughly cleaned.

How about classrooms? Clutter, candy and improper storage are a pests best hiding place and feeding station. Upholstered furniture is a pest haven. By reducing clutter, the jobs of the sanitarian and the pest manager become easier.

If you come across any live pests while cleaning, be sure to record what type and where on the pest sighting log.



Peer pressure . . . How about pest pressure?

ANTivity

If your classroom tends to be a pest hot spot, think of a system you can apply to help to combat the problem. It can be an activity for the whole class. One idea is to assign zones in the classroom that different teams of students are responsible for. Each group can create a team logo and motto (bug busters, bug out, clean machine, etc.). If you have a recycling bin, have the students rinse the cans or bottles, or have a student empty the bin. There are many lesson plans about the benefits of recycling, but if the materials are stored indoors, they provide both food and harborage for unwanted pests. Students can have a creative writing assignment about life in a recycling bin. They can research the biology of the critter and what they would eat, how they would live, how many could be supported by the limited resources, interactions with other animals, etc. You could create a math assignment by having students figure out the volume of a soda can and then calculate how many ants or cockroaches could use it for a living space. Students can also help by having desk, locker or backpack cleanout each week. This could be a game. You could make it a show and tell type of event or could hide an item for the students to find as they are cleaning. Keep in mind that many of these ideas can be formatted to fit the age group of your class. Your pest management professional can install monitoring stations in your room so you can see if your pest reduction plan is effective. You can have students collect data from the monitors before and after your plan goes into effect. Be creative and have fun.

How do you minimize a PVA?

- Reduce pest entry
 - Repair cracks, holes, and gaps
- Reduce food sources
 - Store food, even pet food, in sealable containers
 - Clean, clean, clean
- Reduce harborage
 - Eliminate clutter and cardboard

Mystery of the month . . .

Question: What is a PVA commonly found in teacher's lounges and classrooms that is difficult to treat for pests?

Answer: Refrigerators, microwaves, and toasters.



Remember, pests only need crumbs or food residue (especially greasy surfaces) to survive for months. If these areas are not thoroughly and regularly cleaned, your pest manager will have a difficult time managing the pests. Also, if there is an infestation that must be treated, the food stuffs compete with the bait treatment, making it ineffective. This is a lose lose situation. What is left is an unsanitary area that still has a pest problem. If your school has problem areas like these, determine who is responsible for cleaning that area and set a regular cleaning schedule. In areas like these, there is often upholstered furniture. Don't forget that the furniture needs to be vacuumed as you are cleaning the room. The cracks and crevices hold crumbs and can be home to cockroaches, silverfish and rodents. Sanitation is a group effort and once if maintained, is a crucial part of pest management.

Integrated Pest Management .



Be on the team; keep it clean!
For more information about IPM in schools, or to view past issues of the Pest Press, please visit

<http://schoolipm.ifas.ufl.edu>

The pest press newsletter is available as a document file that can be customized for your school or classroom use. Please visit the school ipm site for more details and a list of newsletter topics.

For further information about the IPM program at your school, contact: the school IPM Coordinator.