

Pest Tip of the Month



Sanitation



Sanitation for pest control is different than sanitation for microbiological reasons. In the context of pest insects and rodents, sanitation is defined as the removal or reduction of the environmental conditions that allow a pest to survive.

Insects and rodents require food, water and shelter to survive. These requirements are like the legs of a tripod, with three legs it can support something, remove one leg and it will not support anything. **Sanitation is the first and most important step in a pest control program. In fact, sanitation is pest control.**

Food



Clean all open sources of food before leaving in the evening to remove overnight food sources for cockroaches and rodents. Clean and seal cracks in the floor to remove another food source for cockroaches and a breeding area for flies. Keep trash containers closed and sealed to remove an attractant for flies and rodents.

Water



Eliminate standing water and repair leaking plumbing to remove water sources for insects and rodents. Moisture is critical for flies because larvae can only survive in moist substrates. Although mice do not need water to survive, rats cannot succeed without free water.

Shelter

Harborage is an often-overlooked component of pest biology. Ecological principles state that a population will grow to fill the available space. Applying this principle to pests in structure, we find that the availability of harborage determines the size to which a population can grow. As harborage is reduced, the potential for infestation decreases.

Exclusion

Caulk cracks to reduce harborage. (Note, if the caulk separates or peels, a harborage is created that cannot be cleaned.) Refrain from enclosing equipment in cabinets or enclosing void spaces. The area under counters creates large harborage areas for cockroaches, rodents and flies and should be a concentration point for sanitation efforts. Seal holes in walls, eliminate debris such as cardboard boxes and remove potential nesting material to help reduce harborage areas.

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