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Copesan is an alliance of regional pest management companies that are united as a single entity for the sole purpose of providing quality pest solutions to businesses with locations throughout North America.

Prevent Weeds from Causing Outdoor Havoc

By Jay Bruesch, Technical Director, Plunkett’s Pest Control, Minneapolis, Minnesota

Seemingly innocuous weeds could wreak havoc on a facility by destroying concrete, starting fires, choking out desirable vegetation and providing a harborage for undesirable pests near the building.

Controlling unsightly weeds before they become the facility’s quiet menace can be accomplished by implementing the following solutions.

Avoid concrete destruction

Problem: Weeds can destroy a parking lot or a sidewalk by growing through small cracks. Once their roots get a foothold, weeds can quickly make cracks in the concrete or asphalt bigger. This allows debris to fall into the larger crack, provides room for more plants to grow, develops potential drainage problems and creates a moist medium that will attract fungus-feeding insects or rodents.

Solution: For weeds around concrete or asphalt, if practical and possible, the best option would be to pull them or mow them. Typically, a chemical sterilant is needed to prevent and eliminate weeds in these areas.

Prevent fires

Problem: If a facility has propane tanks, equipment or pallets stored outside, an employee casually tossing a cigarette into a dry weed patch in the middle of summer could create a major fire.

Solution: Since weeds pose a fire hazard and make access to the equipment difficult, it is usually best to use a soil sterilant or install a rock barrier around these areas. If these areas are uphill from shrubbery or if the soil is densely packed, the vegetation manager may suggest mowing or physical removal of the weeds so the herbicide isn’t carried downhill, potentially killing desirable vegetation.



Eliminate pest harborages near the building

Problem: Weeds and other vegetation growing right next to a facility can attract and breed insects, rodents, snakes and birds (as pictured above).

Solution: Keep all vegetation from coming in contact with a facility’s exterior by putting a three-foot, well-drained, weed-free, stone or rock

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barrier around the perimeter of the facility. Mulch should not be used to create this barrier because it will trap moisture and attract mold-feeding insects, such as springtails and mosquitoes, as well as rodents and other animals.

Get rid of pest attractants on the property

Problem: Weed cover, low-lying shrubs that hug the ground, creeping evergreens and ground covers will trap leaves, debris and moisture, providing a home and

food for rodents, birds, snakes and insects, such as ants, that could eventually enter the building. Low-lying weeds and plantings also make it difficult to inspect the building perimeter for pests.

Solution: It is best to plant shrubs that are wine-glass shaped as opposed to those with foliage that grows close to the ground. If low-growing vegetation is chosen, the bottom tiers of their branches should be trimmed up so air can circulate underneath them. It is

also best not to plant flowering shrubs or trees because the flowers will attract insects like bees and other pests.

Weed help?

Problem: Your facility has a hard-to-control weed problem.

Solution: Contact a vegetation or Copesan pest management professional for ideas on how to keep weeds and pest harborages at bay around your facility.



Landscaping “Do’s” and “Dont’s” for Creating Pest-Free Exteriors

By Earl Hallberg, R.S., Technical Service Manager, Presto-X-Company, Omaha, Nebraska

When picturing a beautifully landscaped building, most people think of flowers, mulch, flowering trees and lots of greenery. But this same description would make a pest management professional think of the insects, rodents and other pests lurking in these landscape materials, increasing the odds that these pests will enter the building.

The good news is that creating both an attractively landscaped facility and a pest-free exterior can be a reality by following the top landscaping “do’s” and “don’ts.”

Creating ground-floor success

Don’t use organic mulch next to the building. Organic mulch, such as wood chips, has the tendency

to hold moisture, which attracts pests, such as millipedes, sowbugs and ground beetles, and gives them a place to breed.

Do use river pebbles, river rock or brick chips to create a two- to three-foot vegetation-free barrier next to the building (picture on page 3). Materials like these will dry rapidly if they get wet.

Don’t use plastic to prevent weed growth. The plastic will stop weeds, but it also will hold moisture underneath it, creating a pest harborage that is hard to access.

Do use landscape cloth. This material solves both potential problems by allowing water to pass through it, while also

preventing weeds.

Choose vegetation wisely

Don’t plant flowers, flowering trees or shrubs, or berry- or fruit-producing trees or shrubs. Flowers and flowering trees and shrubs look nice when they bloom in the spring, but the flowers and berries will attract insects, such as bees and tree bugs. The fruit and berries also will draw insects and other animals, such as flies, carrion beetles, rodents and deer, to the area.

Don’t put in ground covers of any kind such as creeping evergreens. These ground covers will quickly create a pest harborage area.

Do plant deciduous shrubs and trees. If you choose to plant this

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type of vegetation, make sure the leaves are cleaned up when the trees or shrubs loose them in the fall. Otherwise the accumulation of organic debris will create a harborage and attractant for rodents, insects and other animals.

Do plant evergreens such as yews and junipers. Evergreens are beneficial plantings because they don't drop their leaves or needles



in the fall. As the needles die and fall off of the planting, these death needles and bracts need to be cleaned up just as you would with other leaves. Also with these trees and bushes, the lower-tier branches should be kept trimmed up to allow air to circulate underneath the planting so the ground

stays dry. This will prevent the creation of a year-round harborage for pests like insects and rodents.

Do remove mulch from around trees and newly planted trees as soon as possible. Since wood mulch will act as a pest attractant, it needs to be removed as soon as the tree's root system is established, which should take no longer than a

couple of years.

Know your H2O flow

Don't allow sprinkler systems to spray water on the facility or the vegetation-free barrier next to the facility. Any steps taken to keep the area next the building dry will be defeated if sprinklers are frequently spraying water on the

landscape barrier around the building.

Do inspect sprinkler systems regularly to ensure they are working properly. A broken sprinkler head could create a puddle of standing water that will create an insect breeding ground.

Do survey areas around facilities after a heavy rain for low-lying areas that retain standing water. If standing water is found in these areas, a permanent solution would be to re-landscape the area and bring it up to grade with the rest of the area. To reduce pests in the interim, an insect growth regulator could be used.

Don't feed the animals

Don't put out birdfeeders around the facility. Not only are birds a potential pest problem, but any birdseed that falls to the ground could attract insects and rodents to the area.

Do monitor exterior break areas to ensure they are kept clean of food and garbage. Trash containers need to be emptied and cleaned routinely so the areas don't attract pests.

Plan with the professionals

Do consult with your pest management professional before doing any extensive landscaping around your facility. Your Copesan pest management service professional will help steer you away from any landscaping materials that will attract and breed unwanted pests.



Top 10 Ways to Get Rid of Flies

By Mark “Shep” Sheperdigian, Vice President of Technical Services for Rose Pest Solutions in Troy, Michigan

While most people think of flies as dirty little insects, it would be more accurate to think of them as flying powder puffs dusted with germs. Depending on the species, some flies can carry more than 100 different kinds of disease-causing germs.

August (or “Fly Month”) is the time when people must be extra diligent in following fly prevention steps because fly populations are at their peak.

So what can you do to help rid your facility of these germ-spreading, summertime pests? Here are the top 10 steps you can take for fly control.

1. Use liners in trash baskets. Wastebaskets and trashcans that receive wet food refuse should be lined with a trashcan liner. This will keep flies from breeding in the bottom of the wastebasket, and it will allow you to tie off the bag when you throw it in the dumpster. Since flies are olfactory animals that primarily rely on their sense of smell, exposed garbage in a dumpster is a magnet for flies.

2. Wash trashcans on a regular basis. Even with the best trashcan liner, food can still get down under the liner, making the bottom of the trashcan an ideal breeding ground for flies. Washing out trashcans on a

weekly basis will help eliminate this problem.

3. Take trash directly from the trashcan to the dumpster or trash compactor. If it is necessary to have a staging area for your garbage before it gets taken outside, this area should be far from exterior doors. Large flies, like houseflies, typically don’t breed inside, but they could use their sharp sense of smell to find garbage located near entranceways to your facility.



4. Locate dumpsters and trash compactors as far away from the facility as is practical. While it may be tempting to have your dumpster or trash compactor close to a back door so the trash is easy to take out, this location will increase the odds of flies entering your building. Also avoid dragging the garbage to the dumpster or compactor because, over time, it will create a greasy, smelly path that will attract flies.

5. Empty the dumpster regularly in warm weather (68 degrees and above). Ideally, dumpsters should be emptied twice a week. If you only empty your dumpster once a week, within that week flies could lay hundreds of eggs. These fly larvae may crawl out of the dumpster and pupate in the trash area. Then even after the trash is emptied, you will still have a huge fly problem.

6. Wash out your dumpster on a regular basis. How often your dumpster needs to be cleaned will vary. Just make sure dumpsters are not allowed to build up a moist accumulation of refuse – the perfect home for flies.

7. Regularly check for and remove fly attractive material near the dumpster. In addition to the dumpster itself, materials such as animal feces, food and beverage waste in the parking lot or near the break room, or fresh grass clippings could also be attracting flies and should be removed.

8. Keep doors closed and window screens intact. Open doors and holes in your window screens give flies an invitation into your facility. In addition to using high-quality, tight-fitting screens, be sure to check screens for holes on a regular basis.

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An example of a well placed dumpster as described in example 4.

9. Implement an employee door use policy. Try to route employee traffic in such a way that the doors leading directly into processing areas from the outside, especially near dumpsters, are not routinely used. Otherwise, flies will have direct access to sensitive areas.

10. Execute a fly management program. If these suggestions don't resolve your fly problems, you should contact your Copesan pest management professional who will guide you expertly along the path toward fly reduction.



Fumigation Update

By Jim Sargent, Director of Technical Support and Regulatory Compliance for Copesan

Fumigation is an important procedure that directly or indirectly affects food companies and all consumers. Since there have been a lot of changes to keep track of in the fumigation arena, here are some recent highlights.

ProFume's label greatly expanded. ProFume, containing sulfuryl fluoride, was registered last year by the United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). However, its uses were very limited, especially when considering all the different ingredients and food materials present during a general fumigation.

The big news is that on July 15, the EPA accepted a new ProFume label from Dow AgroSciences that allows its use on cocoa beans,

coffee beans, and many other food commodities and ingredients. The new label also improves on the usability and practicality of using the fumigant in the real world.

ProFume (with the new label) should be legal to use in most states by the end of August 2005. This is good news for people and companies that were having an infestation problem but until now had nothing legal to use.

Phosphine regulatory guidance released. Recently, many people, including state regulatory people, have had questions about how to interpret the phosphine label and labeling language. In July, the EPA released a 16-page question-and-answer document to help people with their questions. It doesn't answer every question

about required written fumigation management plans, but it should help reduce some of the disagreement on the meaning of some words and phrases.

New DOT security requirements cost more. Drivers of vehicles carrying fumigants are now required to be fingerprinted and undergo FBI criminal background checks. These new Department of Transportation (DOT) requirements add a small cost to fumigation companies and their fumigation services.

The larger cost seems to be the time spent going through random truck inspections when transporting the fumigant to the fumigation. In some localities, properly placarded trucks are being stopped repeatedly by

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multiple law enforcement officials – sometimes for an hour or more each time. It may be prudent to transport fumigant in one vehicle and transport the fumigation crew and all non-hazardous equipment and supplies in other vehicles.

More exports require fumigation. Increasingly, more companies are learning about the complexity of shipping products to other countries if wood pallets, crating and other wood packing materials are used (see last issue of the Copesan IPM Update).

Nations announce new requirements and implementation/enforcement dates, but importing companies in those nations and companies in exporting nations do not learn of these regulatory changes until too late. Then the export shipment is refused entry and possibly destroyed because the wood packing wasn't properly treated.

The best advice for companies is to continually check on the requirements of the nation where export shipments are destined.

Copesan can help. While there have been a lot of fumigation changes already this year, this definitely won't be the end of them. Stay tuned for more fumigation news in future issues of Copesan's IPM Update.

For more information about any of the mentioned items or for answers to other fumigation questions, contact a Copesan fumigation specialist.



Information in this publication was researched and prepared by highly regarded experts within the pest management industry that are part of the Copesan Partnership. Copesan has more technical expertise located throughout North America than any other pest management firm. The IPM Update is a small sampling of that knowledge and expertise we provide to our clients.

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