



Pests and Pesticides in Child-serving Facilities: An IPM Newsletter

Special Points of Interest

Fire Ant Baiting Demonstration May 27, 2025

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Figure 1. White flags denote the presence of fire ant mounds. On this southeastern Tennessee school property 79 mounds were found per acre. Credit: Karen Vail

None of us want to see headlines that athletic fields or parks have been closed due to fire ants and events need to be rescheduled, or worse, that a child has died from a severe allergic reaction. Now is the perfect time to treat for fire ants when temperatures are between 68 and 86 degrees F and to develop your fire ant management strategy. We have a publication you can reference: *Managing Fire Ants in and around Tennessee's Schools*, <https://utia.tennessee.edu/publications/wp-content/uploads/sites/269/2023/10/PB1788.pdf> to help you decide on your strategy; and a supporting publication that lists fire ant products that are labeled for schools, <https://utia.tennessee.edu/publications/wp-content/uploads/sites/269/2023/10/W649.pdf>. To help prepare you for the upcoming fire ant baiting season we are offering a hands-on training at Dayton City schools on May 27th from 9 am to noon. **Please contact Tim Morgan, Dayton City Schools** (morganti@daytoncity.net, 423 285 7611), or **Patrick Underwood, Southeastern District of the Tennessee School Plant Management Association** (underwoodp@etowahcityschool.com, 423-263-5483), if you are interested in attending.

We'll share many tips to increase baiting effectiveness. For instance, it's easy to overlook fire ant issues when conditions are dry because the mound may be barely visible above the grass. It's better to inspect after rain when mounds are taller. In Figure 1 above, not only were the conditions dry, but the grass had been recently mowed. The mounds were scalped and not easy to see. **Mowing immediately before bait application can decrease the effectiveness of the bait because ant workers may be busy rebuilding the mound and ignore the bait; and a bait must be consumed to be effective.**



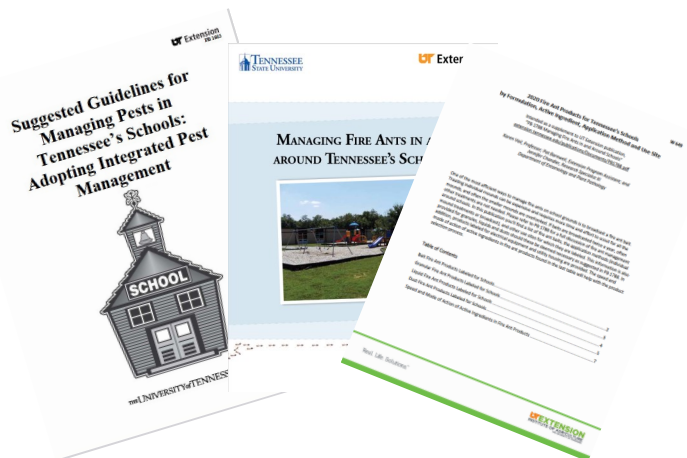
Fire Ant Baiting Demonstration

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Join us at the Tennessee School Plant Management Association Summer Meeting

The TSPMA Summer Conference is scheduled for June 9–11 at the Gatlinburg Convention Center and you'll have several opportunities to ask questions about using integrated pest management on school properties. On Monday, June 9, a school IPM session will be included in the **MODULE 3: Environmental Health & Safety CORE Certification Training** held from 12:30—3:30 pm. On Tuesday, my staff will be at a booth to share a display box of common school insect pests and our pest publications. Hannah Ginn, our graduate student, will discuss the results of her tick dragging on Tennessee school grounds.



Visit our booth at TSPMA where Hannah Ginn, UT EPP MS graduate student, will discuss the ticks found dragging East Tennessee school grounds and you can pick up your favorite school IPM publication.



Free insect edibles to the first 24 visitors to our booth! Photo Credit: <https://www.amazon.com/dp/B01AB4P6JY/>

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For more information about IPM in Tennessee schools and other facilities, or to view past issues of *Pests and Pesticides in Child-serving Facilities*, please visit <http://schoolipm.tennessee.edu>

NATIONAL IPM INFORMATION

eXtension's Pests in the Home
<https://pestsinthehome.extension.org/>

National School IPM
schoolipm.ifas.ufl.edu/

IPM in Schools Texas
<http://schoolipm.tamu.edu/>

IPM Institute of North America
www.ipminstitute.org/

The Pest Defense for Healthy Schools Online IPM
Training for School Employees
pestdefenseforhealthyschools.org

EPA schools
<http://www2.epa.gov/managing-pests-schools>

For further information about the IPM program at your school or in your county, contact your county Extension Agent or the school IPM Coordinator. For county agent contact information, please visit <https://utextension.tennessee.edu/office-locations-departments-centers/>

Precautionary Statement

To protect people and the environment, pesticides should be used safely. This is everyone's responsibility, especially the user. Read and follow label directions carefully before you buy, mix, apply, store or dispose of a pesticide. According to laws regulating pesticides, they must be used only as directed by the label and registered for use in your state.

Disclaimer

This publication contains pesticide recommendations that are subject to change at any time. The recommendations in this publication are provided only as a guide. It is always the pesticide applicator's responsibility, by law, to read and follow all current label directions for the specific pesticide being used. The label always takes precedence over the recommendations found in this publication.

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