

# Tips & Tricks FLEAS AND TICKS

## Control Solutions Inc.

By Dr. Brittany Campbell, BCE

*Technical Services Manager*



Pets around homes or wooded areas are prime targets for flea and tick activity. These bloodsucking pests thrive on blood and can multiply when plenty of hosts are available around a structure. Here are some tips to keep in mind for flea and tick control this summer as activity increases:

► **Communicate with customers.** Ask about areas where pets like to sleep and eat. Roam the property, paying special attention to vegetation and the areas where the lawn and wooded areas intersect — these are the hot spots where ticks tend to hang out. Discourage customers from leaving food out for stray animals. Unfortunately, those stray animals can bring pests along with them.

► **Sunlight is our friend.** Ticks and fleas typically will not frequent areas that are sunny, dry and with low cut grass. Talk to customers about landscape management and encourage them to regularly cut back the grass and trim shrubs to reduce conducive conditions for fleas and ticks.

► **Those crazy kids.** Most fleas in an infestation are immatures; very few are adults. Incorporating an insect growth regulator (IGR) in your treatment will help tremendously and target the most prevalent immature stages.

## MGK

By Christy Jones, BCE

*Technical Data Support Specialist*



Fleas and ticks are blood feeders. They have the potential to spread diseases to the animals they feed on, putting your customers and their pets in danger of getting sick. Fortunately, with a little help from your customers, fleas and ticks can be relatively easy to prevent and treat. In addition to treating their yard with an insecticide that provides a quick kill and residual protection of current and further flea and tick infestations, share the following three directives with your residential customers:

**1. Treat and maintain the yard.** Explain that by mowing the yard and collecting the clippings, they can reduce areas where fleas and ticks like to hang out.

**2. Treat pets.** Reinforce that treating their pets with products approved by their veterinarian will help

prevent these pests from establishing a population in their yards or homes.

**3. Treat the home.** Share how vacuuming can be a tool they can use to help prevent these pests from gaining a foothold in their homes. Encourage them to use a heavy-duty vacuum and ensure they vacuum the carpets, floors and upholstery. This will remove a large amount of flea eggs and larvae. Emptying the vacuum outside will ensure any pests vacuumed up stay out of the home.

Sharing these steps with customers can not only help kill and prevent fleas and ticks, but it also can boost your customers' trust and satisfaction.

## BASF

By Dr. Bob Davis, BCE

*Technical Services Representative*



Fleas are nuisance pests that pose health risks. They can build up large populations. This can pose problems, and your knowledge of flea biology can help eliminate infestations. Here are some tips:

► **Find the source.** Immature fleas are common where pets or other animals rest. Finding these spots will help with cleaning and flea treatments.

► **Don't forget the pupae.** Pupal fleas will metamorphose and emerge as adults. However, they can remain protected in the puparium for months. Vacuuming is critical, as fleas use vibrations to detect potential hosts. Vacuuming vibrations can trigger adult fleas to emerge from puparia, aids in flea removal, and exposes emerged adults to your treatments. Ensure, however, that the vacuum bag is disposed of and not left onsite.

► **Advise customers to consider on-animal treatments to pets.** Their veterinarian can be a resource.

► **Choose treatment materials wisely.** Use properly labeled products that provide quick knockdown, good residual and IGR ingredients. The IGR will be important in long-term control of the immature stages.



### ▲ DID YOU KNOW?

**Fleas can jump up to 8 inches high, or 150 times their own height. If humans could do this, we would be able to leap over skyscrapers.**

SOURCE: NATIONAL PEST MANAGEMENT ASSOCIATION

## Ensystex

By Mike Shields

Technical Sales Consultant



Ensuring a flea-free environment requires cooperation from customers to ensure the best results. Educating customers about the crucial role they play will ensure the service is successful.

Establish a customer checklist to help facilitate a clear understanding and compliance, such as

### Before service

- ▶ Vacuum all floors
- ▶ Remove vacuum bag to outdoor trash
- ▶ Mow yard completely and remove clippings to outdoor trash
- ▶ Remove pets to be professionally treated for fleas

### After service (once dry)

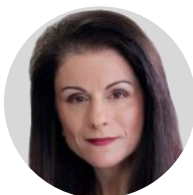
- ▶ Return pets
- ▶ Vacuum daily and sweep all floors
- ▶ Remove vacuum and trash bags to outdoor trash for the next seven to 10 days

For those leaving their property, arranging for daily vacuuming and sweeping is vital, as dormant fleas become active upon sensing vibrations. Failure to maintain these precautions risks a resurgence of fleas, undermining the effectiveness of the treatment.

## Rockwell Labs

By Dr. Cisse Spragins

Founder and CEO



Fleas most commonly become a problem in and around structures from infested pets. Ticks, meanwhile, are most common in yards that are adjacent to wooded areas.

Eliminate conducive conditions outdoors by mowing the lawn and trimming foliage to create a low-humidity environment that pests will avoid. In areas with high tick pressure and Lyme disease, a wood chip or gravel border at least 3 feet wide can be installed between wooded areas and the yard. Spray heavy vegetation and the edges of wooded areas for ticks.

Broadcast yard spray for fleas. For flea infestations indoors, customers should wash, steam treat or throw away infested pet bedding, toys and blankets. Infested furniture should be vacuumed or steam treated.

Just before applying carpet spray treatment, vacuum all areas to remove as many adults, eggs, pupae and larvae as possible, and to stimulate pupal

emergence. Apply silica dust in the creases and under pet beds and rest areas for long-term protection. Do not treat pets, but do instruct residents to treat with a product labeled for on-animal use.

## Syngenta

By Dr. Tim Husen, BCE, PHE, PCQI

Technical Services Manager



Effective flea and tick control can be difficult in some environments. However, with proper preparation and communication, you can greatly enhance your success. Here are five easy steps to follow:

- 1. Inspect.** Interview clients to help identify and inspect all potential flea and tick harborages.
- 2. Prepare.** Maximize treatment areas by clearing the floor inside and picking up debris outside. Clean all floors and bedding indoors while following cleaning product labels. Treat rugs and cloth furniture, and wash pet bedding. Mow the yard to allow treatment

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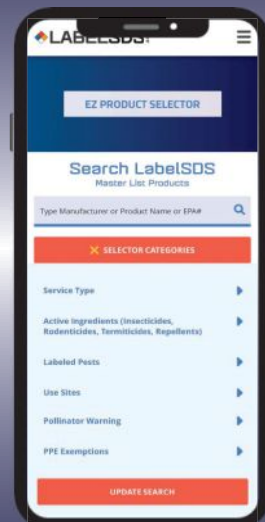
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penetration and remove outdoor clutter such as pet bowls, firewood and debris piles. If present, inspect and clear out any crawlspace debris and remove animals before treatment.

**3. Target.** Apply products in common harborage sites, which often include shaded areas, areas where pets rest outside and areas where ecotone changes (such as marshlands between dry and wet ecosystems) occur.

**4. Treat.** Use both an appropriately labeled adulticide and an IGR for the best results.

**5. Communicate.** Explain the process to clients *before* making applications. This should include when they can return to treated areas and when they should expect decreased populations.

## Envu

**By Matt Remmen**  
Senior Technical Market  
Development Manager

Warmer weather is here, which means



it's time for summer fun. But it's also the time when uninvited guests like fleas and ticks crash the party. You can protect the perimeters of homes with effective tools such as baits, sprays and dusts, but it is also important to educate customers about the steps they can take to reduce their risk of attracting these annoying invaders.

Flea and tick issues often stem from animals.

Customers can reduce risk by:

- ▶ Mowing the lawn below ankle height
- ▶ Removing yard clutter
- ▶ Checking pets for fleas and ticks and discussing preventive measures with their veterinarian

## Zoëcon

**By Mel Whitson**  
Director of Sales

Surges in flea and tick activity are sure to accompany the warmer weather and heavier rainfalls. Known



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for transmitting Lyme disease and other ailments, ticks thrive in wooded areas, tall grass and leaf litter, and near water sources. Inspect these zones carefully — along with stone walls, woodpiles and garden ground cover — to prevent tick-borne illnesses from spreading.

Fleas are another warm-weather menace, notorious for invading homes and spreading diseases such as flea-borne typhus and cat scratch disease. They pose risks to both pets and humans. When inspecting for fleas, focus on areas where pets frequent, such as bedding and toys, as well as hidden spots in carpets, floor cracks, and behind upholstery and curtains. Outdoors, look for animal hiding places, including chimneys, crawlspaces and abandoned nests.

Effective control requires a combination of thorough inspections and targeted treatments to ensure these pests don't gain a foothold.

## Nisus

By Dr. Jamel Sandidge, BCE

National Director of Technical Services

Recent regulations have limited the number of products that can be used to combat fleas and ticks indoors. There often are limitations on carpet applications or long retreatment intervals. These regulations can make customers a little nervous, however, because they may continue to find these pests and suffer from bites.

The biggest issue with these pests is often the sheer number present, thanks to high reproductive success. Populations can get out of control rapidly, especially if a host is nearby.

The first goal is to knock down numbers rapidly. This step may involve finding and eliminating the host, performing exclusion work that prevents wildlife re-entry, and having customers work with their veterinarians to treat pets for fleas and ticks.

Other solutions include using a non-residual insecticide and disinfectant that kills fleas and ticks on contact and can be applied and reapplied as necessary to knock down the population.

With both pests, vacuuming often can be the deciding factor. Using an appropriate product between vacuuming rounds is not only an effective way to kill and eliminate pests rapidly, but it also eliminates other ectoparasites and harmful pathogens. Another bonus: Vacuuming will help deodorize in areas where wildlife has invaded the structure by removing hair and dander.



## Nature-Cide

By Greg Pettis, CE

VP of Business Development

When treating for fleas and ticks in a yard, many pest control firms offer a combo treatment. This is great for the customer — it's a bigger bang for their buck. But the habits of these two bloodsuckers are different and your application should reflect that. Fleas are going to be down in the grass, while ticks will be at the top of grass blades as they "quest" for a host. Each requires a different application strategy.

For fleas, adjust your application equipment to penetrate the blades of grass and target the soil beneath. You might also consider using an all-natural granular solution.

For ticks, regular mowing and keeping grass height at about 2.5 to 3.5 inches will help keep tick populations down. Focus your application on beddings, tree lines and fence lines for a better use of your product to "cut them off at the pass," as it were — before they infest the yard.



## PestWest

By Dr. Stuart "Doc" Mitchell, BCE, MPH

Technical Director

Before treating an infestation of cat fleas (*Ctenocephalides felis*), it's crucial to thoroughly understand the behaviors of the cat, dog — yep, dogs can get cat fleas — or other companion animals involved. This begins with a detailed interview of the pet owners, documenting the pet's specific resting and sleeping habits.

Cat flea larvae comprise about 35 percent of the population, which otherwise consists of eggs at about 50 percent, pupae at about 10 percent and adults about 5 percent. Larvae thrive in spaces where pets rest or sleep, so pet testimony provides invaluable insights.

After gathering information from the pet owners, you can create a precise floor plan that highlights critical spaces as likely "flea distribution areas."

This spatial distribution approach emphasizes the need for comprehensive strategies that address all life stages. The pet owners also should involve their veterinarian for appropriate on-animal treatment. Having their willingness to cooperate will enhance the effectiveness of your structural treatment.

