

How To Protect Your Restaurant From Pests And Still Be A Friend To The Environment

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As “green” continues to be the buzzword of this century, many restaurateurs are looking for ways to green-up their establishments. From water conservation to recycled toilet paper to energy-saving light bulbs, there are numerous ways you can implement environmentally friendly practices in your restaurant—even when it comes to getting rid of unwanted pests.

Thanks to new technologies, environmentally friendly, or “green,” pest management methods can effectively manage pest problems without threatening the environment, food safety or human health. Green pest management efforts are most successful when employed as part of an Integrated Pest Management (IPM) program. IPM programs target the reasons why pests enter foodservice establishments—the availability of food, water and shelter—and emphasize the use of multiple methods to prevent and manage pests.

Review your IPM program with your pest management professional and consider implementing some of the following green techniques at your restaurant.

Install fly lights

Fly lights use ultraviolet light to attract flying pests to a non-toxic sticky board inside a confined trap unit. Install fly lights inside near entrances to food preparation and waste disposal areas. Replace the sticky boards regularly and change the light bulbs every few months. Fly lights also can serve as a good pest-monitoring tool.

Stick it to the pests

Sticky boards can capture cockroaches and other crawling pests when placed in pest “hot spots” (that is, the areas likely to be attractive to pests) such as inside storage areas and under kitchen equipment. Like fly lights, sticky boards can help your pest management professional monitor the number and types of pests found at each location to determine the level of pest activity in the area.

Make pests their own worst enemies

With the help of modern science, pest management professionals can now use pests’ biology against them by using synthetic copies of chemicals involved in pest reproduction and growth. Two of the most common techniques include:

- **Pheromone monitors** – Most often used to help manage stored-product pests such as Indian meal moths, pheromone monitors use synthetic versions of insect pheromones, secreted chemicals pests use to communicate, to lure them to a sticky trap. These traps can provide an early warning of the presence of stored product pests in the stockroom.
- **Insect Growth Regulators (IGRs)** – IGRs use synthetic versions of insect hormones to prevent pests from reaching full maturity, preventing reproduction and limiting the pest population.

Repel and seal out pests

Repellants help move pests to areas easier to control them. Repellent treatments use a combination of a botanical based material, pyrethrins, and silica gel, an inorganic compound that damages insects’ exoskeletons. When pests encounter this combination, they are forced to retreat and the product often dries out their bodies through desiccation. Repellants are used in small openings around the exterior of your restaurant to keep pests, such as ants, from hiding in cracks and crevices. Sealing the openings with caulk after treatment will help reduce the chance of future infestations.

Go organic

As an environmentally friendly alternative to harsh chemical cleaners, organic “green” cleaners use naturally occurring bacteria and enzymes to break down grease and grime. Use an organic cleaner in and around drains, sinks and garbage disposals to eradicate the grease and grime build-up that serves as a breeding area for drain and small fruit flies.

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