

## What to Look for in a Pest Control Company

By Bonnie Martin

No one likes to live with bugs and other pests in the house or business, and sometimes one can go for years without having any major problems. That is not always the case, however, and when you do end up needing to get rid of pests, you want to get the job done efficiently.

Some people will try to take care of the problem themselves with over the counter products they purchase from various places. This works some of the time with some of the pests, but often one finds that they did not have enough knowledge of where, when and how to use it. In that case, it's time or actually past time, to call in the experts before the problem gets even worse. Often, the delay in calling in a professional ends up costing the consumer even more than it would have in the beginning because the problem got so bad.

In Georgia, all pest control technicians have to be registered which means they have passed a test demonstrating their knowledge of pests, safety issues, labels, and treatments. They also are required to take a minimum of 8 continuing education hours every two years. In addition, they have to work under a certified operator who has passed an even more extensive test and takes a minimum of 28 hours of continuing education every five years. The pests don't change, but our knowledge of them continues to improve as well as methods to control them in the safest ways possible.

Unfortunately for the consumer, not all pest control companies are created equally. It's like a lot of service marketing with some being interested in volume sales whereas others are focused on quality service. Finding a company that will do the best job for you should not be based on price criteria alone.

It's not very cost effective to get cheap service that doesn't get the desired results.

There are many ways to locate a pest control company. The telephone directory for your area, advertisements, and one of the best ways – word of mouth. If you can get a recommendation from someone who has used a company and was happy with them, chances are you will be too.

If you can't get any recommendations from people you know, contact several companies and talk to them about your problem. They should have some questions for you in order to have an idea about what will need to be done. They will need to know the size of the building, what the pest is (if you know it), and how long has it been a problem. Often, they will need to see the situation before they can give you a quote on pricing. A red flag would be talking to someone who immediately gives you a price that

seems too good to be true and who can't tell you what the technician might need to do when he/she comes.

Things you will want to know in addition to price would include what you need to do in preparation for treatment, what kind of follow up visits might be needed and whether they are included in the price given, as well as what guarantees are offered.

Depending on the pests, some problems can be treated in one visit and set up for quarterly visits. Others might take multiple treatments or more closely spaced visits. There is no one absolute answer for all pests, and if you find a company that wants to treat your situation with a cookie cutter approach, that's not going to be an approach you will be happy having paid for, even if it is cheap.