

Bed Bug Blog: Part 4 of 4

In part 4 of this interview series, we will discuss: How you can tell if a tenant's previous apartment had a bed bug problem, Screening tenants for bed bugs. Is it effective?, How you can tell if your city has a bed bug problem, The banning of DDT, Common pest control problems besides bedbugs and roaches, Where to get real time accurate information on bed bugs & conclusion.

Now, as an apartment owner or property manager, is there a way I can tell if a tenant's previous apartment had a bedbug problem?

Once the apartment is completely vacant, they certainly could do an inspection of that unit. Again, it would involve some of the things I talked about earlier. They could involve a professional who could do a quick inspection with a dog and determine if there was any sign of the bugs. That would probably be one of the quickest ways they could do it. Also, do some of the visual things that we mentioned. Again, I would recommend a professional because they really know what they're looking for. Using the UVA lamps, the enhancement glasses, those would be some of the types of things that they could do, or using those monitoring stations that we mentioned earlier.

How about for tenants screening? I have a tenant coming in and I really want to avoid bringing somebody in that has bedbugs. What would you recommend for that?

That becomes a little bit more challenging. I guess the challenge with that is you know they could be bedbug free on the day they move in. But the very next day, they can pick up bedbugs out of a movie theater, in their places of employment, in a retail location. So it's really challenging; just because somebody's free and clear one day, it doesn't mean that will be the case the next.

I would say most people don't have a strong tolerance for pests of any kind, but most pests don't choose to travel on us. Most pests don't feed off of us. We are not their meal, and so I think that really complicates things with bedbugs. That's why problems are creeping up with bedbugs being picked up in locations that formerly were considered atypical.

I also would want to offer a degree of caution in talking about inspecting in tenant situations. We don't want to freak anybody out or cause anyone to want to live in a plastic bubble, so to speak. I think what anyone is thinking about bedbugs, even though they're on the rise, we're hearing an incredible amount about them within the media. And our members are reporting significant increases in treating them.

People have to look at their risks. If you are living in an area that's fortunately still not reporting a lot of bedbug problems, I would have a tendency to breathe a little easier there. If you are talking about property managers in highly densely populated communities--Manhattan, Los Angeles, Chicago, Baltimore, you're going to want to practice extra vigilance, and certainly make sure that you are fully aware and educated about the problem because your risk factors there are certainly much higher. The risk is higher of people moving into your buildings with the bedbugs, and certainly much higher for people picking them up as they go about their daily lives, and bringing them into your units as well.

Is there any way an apartment owner could tell if bedbugs are an extra problem in their particular area? Or should they just use a lot of these preventative measures we talked about and leave it at that?

I have two thoughts on that. Certainly, just follow the news. The news in particular right now is reporting on bedbugs a lot. They can certainly talk with their pest professional; I know most apartment owners and managers have a relationship for just the general treatment of their facilities, like their pest professional. They could talk about that with them and determine what they're seeing, feeling and experiencing within their community and how the rest of the neighborhood might be to them. I think that goes as part of being properly educated.

I read that bedbugs had been exterminated, or they've been gone for five decades; that they were wiped out after World War II with DDT. I guess it's some sort of contact poison or acts as one, and it was banned I think in the early '70s. Do you have any insight on that?

Well, as I understand it, it was banned in the early '70s by the EPA because there were beliefs that it was perhaps resulting in the death of higher order species like raptors, like bald eagles.

What are the most common pest control problems seen in apartments besides bedbugs and roaches?

You know we certainly hear a lot about roaches, and certainly now, a lot about bedbugs. Some of the other pests that probably are known to frequent the units a little bit more than others would be ants. That's the number one nuisance pest

in America. And there are various species, depending on what part of the country in which people live. There could be carpenter ants or odorous house ants or non-odorous house ants, larger yellow ants. Some of the other things would be beetles, spiders, certainly house mice, and rats.

Is there anything else you'd like to share?

I know you mentioned at the beginning of our discussion, our website pestworld.org. Pestworld.org is a site that's been designed for consumers, for homeowners, for property renters, and then also for commercial businesses as well. There's a lot of helpful information on there about bedbugs in particular and certainly about a variety of other pests as well.

And so, if anyone is looking for more information so that they can educate themselves, and also some tips on ways that they can minimize the likelihood of bringing bedbugs home when they're traveling, when they're shopping, when they're out and about, we do have a lot of tips there. We have a special section on there called Bedbug Hub.

Also, I happily answer questions people may have. Our role really, within our statement of the organization, is to help consumers so that we all are properly educated and informed.

Do you have a great pest control professional partnership? How has it helped you? Please share your questions or comments with us! Thank you.

Posted by **Global Administrator** on 3/31/2011 5:38:40 AM