

Integrated pest management

The pest control industry itself has gone through quite a transformation over the past few years. It has evolved into a highly professional industry, with integrated pest management being a current industry catchphrase. Integrated pest management has its roots firmly entrenched in using an intelligent approach towards the management of pests, instead of just looking at killing as many pest species as possible.

Chris Scheepers, MD of Ufundu, explains that prior to the submission of a quote to clients, a thorough site visit is conducted, enabling the company to do a proper assessment of the client's particular requirements. "Our team of experts will then advise you accordingly, with regards to the proposed solution – including a detailed breakdown of the chemicals to be used. This enables us to give much-needed advice from both a hygienic and a cost-saving perspective. All products used are South African Bureau of Standards and South African Pest Control Board of South Africa approved and are of the highest quality," says Scheepers.

Integrated pest management is considered a 'green' approach, as chemical control is viewed as a last resort after a number of preventative steps have already been taken.

Custodians of the environment

Andre Swanepoel of Pest Control & Cleaning Specialists echoes Scheepers' sentiments, saying that the industry has been working hard to shed the 'bug man' label one often sees in movies. "We are custodians of the environment and public health and we recognise our obligation to provide cost-efficient solutions to our clients with as little disruption to the environment as possible," imparts Swanepoel.

When asked to comment on 'green' pest management, Swanepoel replies that it is essentially the same as integrated pest management, but due to people not really understanding what it entails, the word 'green' is often used. "We first look at biological control and then at mechanical control, only considering chemical control later on," says Swanepoel, adding that throughout the process proper housekeeping and hygiene standards are essential.

Getting practical

Integrated pest management, or 'green' pest management, can be highly effective, says Swanepoel, citing an example from the city of Atlanta in the US where pest control practitioners were not allowed to control any vermin using chemicals for a period of six months. "After the initial six months, pest management companies reported an 85% drop in chemical use in the six months that followed as a result of the measures that were implemented during the lockdown," says Swanepoel.

"Both clients and the general public should be educated about the role and purpose of pest management companies and be prepared to engage and work with them to develop an environmentally-friendly and lasting solution," Swanepoel adds.

Rats and mice are probably two of the more serious threats to health and safety, compared to other pests such as termites and bees. Based on the principles of integrated pest management, Ufundu has developed five golden rules for dealing with rats and mice as a guide for its clients.

It is important that facilities managers take a proactive approach towards pest management



Hygiene, maintenance and management

When looking at food security, there are basically three pillars of general compliance. The first step is hygiene, the second is maintenance and the third is pest management, informs Mark Enslin, president of the South African Pest Control Association.