



Don't toss old ILT bulbs, UF researchers say

In their study, University of Florida's Phil Koehler and John Cooksey found that 13 month old bulbs caught about 80 to 90 percent as many flies as the new bulbs caught. Restaurants and supermarkets could save millions of rands by hanging on to insect light trap bulbs instead of tossing them every year as they normally do, a new University of Florida study has found.

What's more, the benefits could extend to the environment by keeping some of the bulbs' mercury out of the waste stream.

Phil Koehler, an entomology professor in UF's Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences, presented study findings at October's NPMA PestWorld in Phoenix.

John Cooksey, a doctoral student working with Koehler, helped present the study.

Koehler said he and Cooksey examined 20 insect light traps over the past year because they're the prime method to control flies in restaurants, supermarkets, and other commercial establishments. They wanted to know if users of commercial-grade traps could use bulbs for longer periods of time while maintaining effective pest control.

"Whenever you go into a restaurant, there's usually a light trap there that's designed to catch flies," Koehler said. "It may look like a sconce on the wall, but it probably is a light trap."

In their study, Koehler and Cooksey found that 13 month old bulbs caught about 80 to 90 percent as many flies as the new bulbs caught. That's good news on two fronts, Koehler said.

that changing bulbs on just one large commercial contract could cost around R15, 000. Each bulb costs only about R150 but a large commercial contract might require as many as 1,500 bulbs, Koehler said.



The second good news to come from the study is on the environmental front.

"Most fluorescent bulbs used in insect light traps contain mercury," Koehler said. "They're recyclable, and you try not to throw them out in the trash, but you know some will end up there. The more often you throw away these bulbs, the more potential for environmental contamination."

The only data available from the pest management industry comes from bulb manufacturers, who maintain that bulbs don't emit as much light after a year and that is true, Koehler said.

"But no one ever asked: are those old bulbs as attractive to flies as the new ones?" he said. "When is it time to throw the bulb away, based on the fly, rather than the manufacturer?"

The study is continuing to review bulbs' attractiveness to flies as the bulbs age.

The correct procedure to follow when replacing ILT bulbs is to test the UV output of the existing globes with a UV meter keeping in mind the specified output UV range and if you do not have this equipment

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One is financial. then you need to replace the ILT
"Cooksey has some large bulbs yearly and preferably at the
commercial contracts," Koehler beginning of spring to get the best
said. He and Cooksey discovered long term use out of the bulbs.

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