



**EARLY
REGISTRATION
AVAILABLE FOR
GENERAL PEST
CONTROL COURSE
CAPE TOWN
6-8 JUNE 2011**

**PEST MANAGEMENT
ACADEMY
INTERNATIONAL
RECOGNISED SKILLS
PROGRAMS FOR
MAY-JULY 2011**

**GENERAL PEST CONTROL
PROGRAM**

23-25 MAY 2011 PRETORIA

6-8 JUNE 2011 CAPE TOWN

20-22 JUNE 2011 PRETORIA

18-20 JULY 2011 PRETORIA

1-3 AUGUST 2011 DURBAN

WEED CONTROL

23-25 MAY 2011 PRETORIA

25-27 JULY 2011 PRETORIA

TERMITE & WOOD

DESTROYING ORGANISMS

13-15 JUNE 2011 PRETORIA

FUMIGATION

3-5 MAY 2011 PRETORIA

15-17 AUGUST 2011 PRETORIA

PLANT PEST & DISEASES

23-25 MAY 2011 PRETORIA

25-27 JULY 2011 PRETORIA

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DEPARTMENT OF
AGRICULTURE, AGRISETA &
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ALL TRAINING COURSES AT A
COST OF R4150**

BITING BUGS IN OFFICES

ARE THEY REAL OR IS IT JUST IMAGINATION?

“Look it’s your job to get rid of the problem. I don’t care how many times you have to spray. Ten of my workers say they’ve been bitten by bugs and they want to know what I’m doing about it. One of my operators has filed a grievance with the union. If you can’t get rid of these bugs, then I’ll find someone who can!”

You’ve inspected and sampled- still no biting pests. Mysterious bites from invisible bugs; not uncommon in office environments with lots of paper, electrical equipment, synthetic carpet and fibres, and static. Conditions in an office can lead to skin irritation and “pinpricks” that feel, and even look, like insect bites. Here are possible reasons for the “bites” when no pests can be found.

Particles- High levels of static electricity can cause particles such as carpet fibres, paper splinters, or tiny pieces from air filters or fibreglass insulation to “jump” onto arms and legs causing irritation. Women who wear nylons are especially susceptible. Nylon carpet, electrical equipment, and low humidity increase static electricity levels.

Indoor air pollutants- modern buildings with closed ventilation systems may have periodic high levels of irritating chemicals such as formaldehyde, resins, and even insecticides. All can cause irritation or allergic reactions. Workers may get relief from an insecticide treatment, but this effect is short-lived. The spray carries dust and particles down into the carpet and temporarily add extra moisture to the air.

Power of suggestion- Sometimes when one person in an office feels an itch or biting sensation and begins to scratch or talk about it, others exhibit the same symptoms. Delusory parasitosis is a condition where a person feels that their body is being bitten or is infested by pests when no pests can be found. That thinking can be transferred to others.

NOT SO FAST THOUGH!

Just because you can’t find pests at first, don’t be too quick to dismiss the situation as a nonpest problem. There are some very real pests that, in unusual circumstances, can be the source of office mystery bits:

Fleas- Fleas that are found in office situations are generally not brought in by workers but are from animals living in or around the office. If there are rats burrowing around the foundation or in a crawlspace, suspect rat fleas. Ordinary cat fleas can be the culprits if there are guard dogs, or wild cats living in a basement. Even after you’ve successfully removed the host animals, their fleas may go looking for new blood, even if that blood is human.

Bed bugs- Even though you may not expect to find bed bugs here, they are becoming an increasing and difficult problem in offices. Bed bugs can hitchhike from employees’ homes to their offices on purses, briefcases, clothes, shoes, and other personal items. Since there are no traditional bed bug inspection sites (like beds) in an office, bed bugs can be hiding anywhere and it’s difficult to find them during the day.

Bird mites- Birds that have been nesting on or in a building, such as in an unscreened vent, can be the source of bird mites, which can then bite people. The tiny mites may escape in large numbers looking for new hosts after baby birds have left the nest or if a nest is removed.

Lice- While body lice are found only in crowded, unsanitary conditions, such as among the homeless, head lice are a real possibility. An office worker may have picked up head lice from her children without realizing it.

Mosquitoes- this outdoor biter leaves itching welts that may not be noticed until sometime later. People that have spent the weekend outside may first notice bites on Monday, blaming them on pests in the office. In one case though, workers were actually being bitten in the office by mosquitoes that were breeding in standing, stagnant water in the basement.

Thrips- these small, winged insects normally suck juices from flowering plants, but they are known to bite people. Office workers may be bitten while eating lunch outside, or be bitten by thrips on fresh cut flowers that have been brought into the office.

TAKE HOME LESSON

In an office situation where there are complaints of bite, you need to do a very thorough inspection, including interviewing employees. Don’t be talked into spraying pesticides if no pests can be found but don’t be too quick to rule out pests either.