

ThermaPureHeat says its heat methodology is a safe, effective, non-chemical pest eradication and environmental remediation process.



ThermaPure CEO Michael Linford (left) and David Hedman, president of TPE Associates.

A UNIQUE HEAT TREATMENT

By Jordan Fox

A recently published study suggests bed bugs could possibly play a role in transmitting disease. Researchers at a Canadian hospital found MRSA in a small sample of bed bugs there. Researchers tested three patients from a Vancouver, BC, neighborhood whose homes were infested with bed bugs. They collected five bed bugs and found they carried two types of drug-resistant bacteria — three contained methicillin-resistant *Staphylococcus aureus* (MRSA) and two contained vancomycin-resistant *Enterococcus faecium* (VRE).

MRSA and VRE have evolved in the last three to five decades and are resistant to penicillin-based antibiotics. Spread by casual contact, they can cause health problems, including life-threatening infections if the microbe enters vital organs. According to one of the study's authors, these research results suggest that bed bugs may play a role in the transmission of MRSA in inner-city populations where bed bug infestations are a problem.

"That's all the more reason to eradicate bed bugs efficiently, safely and effectively," say Dr. Michael Linford and David Hedman, principals of a Ventura, Calif.-based company that utilizes a green technology that can kill bed bugs and sanitize

pathogens at the same time.

The licensing company, TPE Associates/ETherm, has developed a patented methodology to kill bed bugs and other insects and "pasteurize" infected structures. ThermaPureHeat methodology uses clean-burning propane and/or energy efficient electric heaters and fans to evenly distribute air, along with HEPA filtration. Laser particulate meters also can be used to measure the amounts of particulates that might be present in the targeted area.

HOW DOES IT WORK? Linford and Hedman say ThermaPureHeat is a "safe, effective, non-chemical pest eradication and environmental remediation process." It uses clean, dry, odorless convected heat to create a lethal environment for targeted organisms, they say.

How does it work? "Delivering convected heated air for the eradication of insect pests is much more complex than simply turning on heaters and fans. We were first to introduce the heat technology to the structural pest control industry 22 years ago and this has given us experience in the field to perfect the technology. Our licensees are able to utilize our years of field experience in eradicating bed bugs," Linford says. "Heat is directed into

a containment structure through flexible Mylar ducting to slowly raise room air to sauna-like temperatures (140°F to 150°F) until carefully placed temperature probes have achieved lethal temperatures that eradicate the targeted insects."

"In a few short years, our methodology has been applied to thousands of structures across North America that normally would have been treated with pesticides. Certified pest control companies, including many of the nation's largest, have been adding this to their arsenal of pest eradication tools," he says. "With it they are killing bed bugs and other common pests that are increasingly resistant to pesticides."

Hedman says this technology is spreading rapidly as PMPs nationwide seek more eco-friendly ways of combating pests. "The ThermaPureHeat process allows us to deliver 100 percent eradication of bed bugs," he emphasizes. "Our pasteurization process kills insects, mold, bacteria and viruses and can even remove odors with a green technology. Medical doctors have prescribed our process for the structures that their asthma patients live in."

The efficacy of this methodology is discussed in a peer-reviewed study in the *International Journal of Indoor Environment*

and Health. Free copies of the study are available at ThermaPure.com.

Pat Capps, Orkin technical services manager, Riverside, Calif., says the company's Pacific Division has been using ThermaPureHeat for the past three years. "We started out slowly, having initially invested in a small amount of propane heaters, but customer concern about bed bugs has grown since then, as has demand for green technology. Our Anaheim office now has four large box trucks for the heaters, fans and air purifiers, and we have a fifth one in northern California." Capps says Orkin treats both residential and commercial properties.

PMP COMMENTS. In West Palm Beach, Fla., Scott Gosney's Advanced Pest Control became a ThermaPureHeat licensee in 2009 and has seen its bed bug eradication business double since then.

"At first we mostly treated single-family homes, but now we're doing more com-

mercial work on hotels and apartment buildings — large projects, small projects and everything in between. We use both direct fire propane heaters as well as electric heaters. What we use depends on the project. In a hotel, for example, discretion is understandably important. Hotels don't want their guests to see our big equipment outside and guess what's going on. So we cover up electric heaters and air filtration equipment, put them on bellhop carts and move them to infested rooms. It takes us about an hour to set up and the next day the room is completely bed bug free."

Goldseal Termite and Pest Control Co., headquartered in Indianapolis, Ind., runs six to 10 heat crews each day throughout several states in the Midwest. They have utilized ThermaPureHeat over the past three years to kill bed bugs in private residences, multi-family units, hotels, retail establishments and moving trucks.

According to Elia Levin, Gold Seal's president, "the heat treatment science is

exact and it's 99.9 percent effective." The need to evenly distribute the heat is important as is the need to filter the air to eliminate particulates, he states. "Treating bed bugs with insecticides is effective but our pesticide protocol requires several treatments over a period of several weeks. With heat treatments, if you do it right it's a once and done application. You can do it all in one day."

Ron Ketner, AZEX Pest Solutions, Phoenix, Ariz., has used ThermaPureHeat on bed bugs and says it best illustrates the importance of IPM. "The most ecological and responsible form of pest management today resides in the concept of an IPM approach. Heat treatments fall into that IPM category, which of course, involves reducing the use and need for pesticides. Chemical pesticides should always be considered a last resort," he says. **PCT**

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