

APPROACHES TO PEST MANAGEMENT IN MUSEUMS (1998)

by

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PREFACE

The following text is the edited transcript of the presentation at the Museum Support Center of the Smithsonian Institution on July 24th, 1998. This presentation formed the core of a one day course (Preservation Fundamentals III: Pests #C98-17) aimed at conservators, collection managers, pest control operators and others involved in protection of museum collections and libraries against pests. The object of this presentation was to provide a verbal update of the book "Approaches to Pest Management in Museums" published by the Smithsonian Institution in 1985. That book pioneered the concept of integrated pest management (IPM) for museums, advocating the use of combinations of chemical and non-chemical methods in programs customized for the particular situation.

This presentation reviews the latest information on the biology and damage potential of key museum pests and for each pest outlines possible control measures. The scope of the original book is extended by including warehouse beetles, odd beetles and spider beetles. The various chemical and non-chemical measures are reviewed, with particular emphasis on new technologies, including the successful use of atmospheric gas fumigations and the more problematic role of pheromone traps.

The integrated pest management approach is considered in detail from its agricultural origins to its successful adaptation for urban pest management. The continuing pest problems in some museums are attributed not to any intrinsic flaws in the IPM approach, nor to lack of overall funding, but to unsatisfactory communication between departments and failure to use existing manpower resources. Pest management in museums and libraries should be seen as part of overall preventive conservation efforts involving all departments working in multi-disciplinary teams against pests and conditions which favor pests.

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Keith Story, 1998.

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