

# SKIP THE DIY: BEDBUGS BE GONE FOR GOOD

It may seem remarkable now, but the much-feared bedbug first hitched its way to North America onboard the ships of European settlers. The boats provided a haven for the bugs who thrived in the congested quarters below deck and then travelled inland with their hosts once reaching shore.

The psychological impact of a bedbug infestation plays havoc on those affected. Paranoia and social stigma around bedbug and cockroach infestations run as rampant as the insects themselves, creating an urgency to treat them immediately. But running out to the store to purchase DIY products only makes things worse, explains Shaw Haghgoo, CEO of Pest B Gone Canada Inc.

"The insects actually build an immunity to these products, which makes it more difficult for us to come in and treat the problem," explains Haghgoo.

When compared to commercial-grade products, store-bought pest controls have a lower volume of the active ingredient. This can increase the resilience of the pests the user is trying to defeat, especially when products are applied incorrectly.

"Most people don't read the label to see exactly how much they are supposed to apply," he says. "If they apply too little the insects start building resistance and it makes it very difficult for us to control the infestation."

## COSTLY CHEMICALS

Haghgoo says that the chemicals used by pest control companies are often expensive, tempting contractors to extend the life of the product by diluting it with water.

"We're doing applications which are 99% effective, but they're failing in certain places," he explains. "We're finding that these are areas where either people have used consumer products, or pest control companies are cutting back on the product."

This results in a need for repeated treatments, and a more invasive experience for the building occupants.

"As we increase the type of treatments that we do, the cost increases. Treatments where we could have gone in with a bait treatment, we now have to fumigate which becomes costly. It's much more invasive as now the homeowner or tenant has to be out of the premises for four, maybe eight hours."

According to a 2008 report by Toronto Public Health (TPH), bedbugs weren't considered a problem until 2003 when an upsurge in cases "began to trickle in." TPH responds to bedbug issues where vulnerability is encountered by residents. Via email, TPH reported that since 2020, the number of requests for TPH services pertaining to bedbugs has declined by 16.9%. Haghgoo believes the recent introduction of an effective pesticide may have something to do with that.

Aprehend™ is a non-repellent fungal spore insecticide that is now available to licensed pest control service providers, which he says is highly successful.

"We now have a product that if applied properly can eradicate the complete infestation of bedbugs within 30 days," says Haghgoo.

The product needs no mixing but requires the exterminator to complete a time-intensive application, spraying the product onto the areas bedbugs commonly walk over such as the front of couches.

## EFFECTIVE IN HOARDING / CLUTTERED UNITS

"The exterminator has to take their time," explains Haghgoo. "The infected bedbug takes it back to the nest and infects everything. To do that, you've got to make sure you get everything covered."

The new insecticide is also effective in treating hoarding units. "We will come in all weapons loaded and eradicate whatever we can," he says, "even if there's just a passage for us to walk down."

Haghgoo is an MBA graduate of York University who has worked in the pest industry since 1982. He owns and operates Pest B Gone with his business partner, Iriene Baumgart, who is the President of the company, and an MSc Integrated Pest Management graduate of the University of Wageningen, Netherlands. Baumgart's insight into entomology is an advantage Pest B Gone holds over its competitors when understanding the science of tackling pest removal.

"We're going to resolve your issue," asserts Haghgoo. "If we can sort through what you have dealt with in the past, we can definitely eradicate the problem."

Establishing a monthly maintenance program with Pest B Gone provides an opportunity for managers to take advantage of a 30% discount on service call rates, and create a regular inspection routine for problem units.

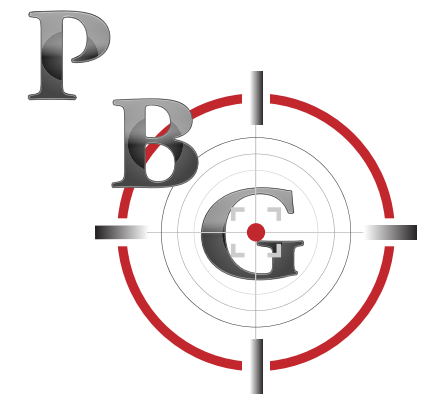


Haghgoo explains that licensing policies for pest control services have stayed the same, but chemicals have changed. It's when the chemicals are abused that they become less effective and more toxic to the environment. "When you abuse the product you start to affect the people," he says. "You're impacting the environment and that's going to cause a problem."

He cautions that the results of a fungal spore application may not be seen immediately, and at first, it may look like the bug infestation has even increased. He recalls treating a bedbug unit and receiving a call from a panicked property manager the next day saying there were twice as many bedbugs as there had been before.

"By the end of the week, he started to see dead bedbugs everywhere. From that point on he said, 'Whatever you did in our building, please use it in all units!'"

Pest B Gone service all through the Greater Toronto and Hamilton region, including Kitchener/Waterloo.  
Connect at [www.pbgcanada.ca](http://www.pbgcanada.ca) or 289-597-BUGS (2847)



Shaw Haghgoo is CEO of Pest B Gone, Canada Inc., a leading provider of structural pest management services. "We have established the highest of standards in the pest control industry, and work to push the limit of that every day."