# BEST MANAGEMENT PRACTICES

## CAT FLEA *CTENOCEPHALIDES FELIS*

### Quick Facts

1. Fleas belong to the insect order Siphonaptera.
2. The cat flea is the most common species that is a pest of man and domestic pets.
3. The cat flea will infest most mammals, not just cats.

### Overview

- Cat fleas are wingless small insects approximately 1/8 to 1/16 of an inch long. Their bodies are laterally flattened from side to side – allowing for easy movement between fur and hair.
- Fleas are blood sucking external parasites of warm-blooded animals.
- Both male and female adult fleas feed exclusively on blood.
- Fleas undergo complete metamorphosis; egg, larva, pupa and adult.
- Adult fleas spend most of their lives on animals.
- Indoors, the eggs, larvae (small and wormlike) and pupae all develop in areas such as carpets, rugs, furniture, in floor cracks and crevices, along baseboards and other areas that pets frequent.
- Outdoors, fleas develop in shaded areas that are frequented by their hosts.
- Eggs and pupal cases tend to be physically resistant to penetration by insecticides, thus control is targeted at the larval and adult stages.

### Management

- Proper identification of the flea species is important along with communication/ cooperation with the customer.
- Control of fleas is extremely difficult without proper sanitation, treatment of host pet(s) and proper preparation for treatment. Educating the customer on the importance of all of these factors is vital to achieve control.

### Inside the Structure

- Identify where the flea infestation is originating; pets, pet resting areas or wild animals. Doing this will help concentrate the treatment where it is needed most.
- Cooperate and coordinate with the homeowner to treat pet(s) and prepare the house for treatment. Pets should be treated by a veterinarian or the homeowner and should not return to

the house until treated. People and pets should be out of the house during treatment and remain out until all treated surfaces are dry.

- Prior to treatment carpets, floors, rugs, mattresses, cushions and wood or tile floors must be thoroughly vacuumed. This will remove exposed eggs, larvae, pupae, pupal cases, adult fleas and their feces (which is food for larvae). Seal and dispose of the vacuum bag immediately after use.
- Wash (in hot water) or dispose of any pet bedding. If the fleas are originating from the pet, identify where the pet sleeps and spends most of its time, as these areas will have the highest concentration of eggs, larvae and pupae.
- Use a properly labeled insecticide for control adult and larval fleas.
- If fleas are originating from wild animals in areas such as the attic or crawlspace, treatment of these areas may be appropriate. Be sure to only use products labeled for flea control in these areas. Exclusion of flea-infested hosts can be done by sealing any potential entry points with caulk, steel wool, screening, or by making appropriate repairs or structural modifications.

## Outside the Structure

Treat the outside lawn and perimeter areas which are conducive to flea infestation. Pay particular attention to areas frequented by pets and wild animals, especially those where the animals rest or spend a significant amount of time.

- Have the homeowner sweep porches, steps, decks and any other hard surfaces.
- The lawn should be mowed just prior to treatment.
- Flea larvae develop in the soil in shaded areas that are frequented by pets or other animals. Treat these areas by applying 2.3 lbs per 1,000 square feet of Talstar® Xtra Granular Insecticide Featuring Verge

Granule Technology. Talstar Xtra Verge granules will filter down to the soil surface where the eggs, larvae and pupa develop. Irrigate treated areas with 0.5 inches of water immediately after application.

- To control adult fleas treat infested areas of the yard with Talstar® Professional at a rate of 1.0 fl. oz. of concentrate per 1000 sq ft using sufficient water (up to 10 gallons per 1000 sq ft) to insure good distribution. A surfactant added to the spray solution may help in control. Flea eggs will not usually be killed by Talstar, but larvae hatching from their eggs may still be affected by any residual present at time of hatching. The additional use of an appropriate IGR may be helpful for exterior treatments to inhibit larval development.

TALSTAR® XTRA GRANULAR INSECTICIDE FEATURING VERGE GRANULE TECHNOLOGY

TALSTAR® PRO INSECTICIDE

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