

# FINGER LAKES TIMES

PAUL M. BARRETT / Publisher

**CHUCK SCHADING**  
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**MARY K. SCHOONOVER**  
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*"The First Amendment ensures that all points of view may be heard; it does not ensure that all points of view are equally likely to prevail."*

— **Michael McConnell, U.S. appellate judge, 2006**

*Community Media Group*

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### Cornell's IPM program has the expertise on bed bugs

To the Editor:

I suspect that Jay Ambrose was trying to bait environmentalists with his commentary "What bed bug bites mean" (*Times*, Sept. 23). I'd like to take his bait, correct some inaccuracies regarding bed bugs and offer real-world solutions.

Yes, bed bugs have made a remarkable comeback over the past decade, in the United States and many developed countries. The common rallying cry to "bring back DDT" to quickly and safely solve bed bug problems begs a reaction. The 1972 ban of DDT in the U.S. is not the reason for the resurgence of bed bugs worldwide. There's a 30-year gap in that theory. Although DDT devastated bed bug populations initially, bed bugs had developed measurable tolerance to DDT as early as 1958 and had become so resistant to its effects that DDT was eventually abandoned in favor of a more effective chemical that eventually decimated bed bug populations in the developed world. But bed bugs didn't completely disappear. A study published in 2008 ranked DDT as by

far the worst performing of numerous chemicals that were tested against bed bugs.

In fact, there is no insecticide (aside from gas fumigation) that works to kill bed bugs 100 percent of the time. That's right, no silver bullet. Eliminating bed bugs from homes requires a combination of smart actions referred to as Integrated Pest Management (IPM). IPM aims to prevent, exclude, deter and sometimes kill pests, while minimizing any negative impacts on human health and the environment. Among the most critical IPM actions are to become aware; know the bug, its life cycle and vulnerabilities; and know how to protect yourself from infestation.

IPM requires knowledge, and luckily for New Yorkers, we have the expertise at Cornell University in the NY State IPM Program. Ironically, the state recently stopped funding our community IPM efforts — but believe me, you still need us if you want the bed bugs to stop biting. Visit [www.nysipm.cornell.edu](http://www.nysipm.cornell.edu) for more information.

**JODY GANGLOFF-KAUFMANN**  
IPM Specialist/Urban Entomologist  
NYS IPM Program  
Geneva