



Rid-A-Pest conducts classroom forums

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WILSON, N.C. — To celebrate April as National Pest Awareness Month, Rid-a-Pest Vice President Lee Smith is conducting classroom forums to teach first and second graders about insects. Smith, an entomologist, correlates the presentation with issues that the teachers are required to teach in their curriculum.

"I want the students to gain a real interest in entomology," says Smith. "Who knows — these kids may be future 'bug guys' themselves."

As director of Rid-a-Pest's Morehead facility, Smith contacted all Carteret County Elementary Schools and was invited to present to Newport Elementary, Beaufort Elementary, Harker's Island Elementary and Bogue Sound Elementary. The presentation included a brief Powerpoint presentation about "smart insects."

"I really wanted the students to learn about insects from a different perspective," Smith says. "They were intrigued to learn just how smart insects are because they can communicate and defend themselves from predators through mimicry, camouflage and warning coloration."

The classroom forum was divided into four hands-on learning centers where students were allowed to rotate and learn through participation:

- Live termites that follow red lines drawn on paper by the children. The termites will follow the line because it mimics the scent pheromones they use to follow other termites to their colony.
- Insect collections ranging from common to rare, including dead leaf mantids, butterflies, metallic beetles and flies.
- Live tobacco hornworms donated by the Insectary at North Carolina State University; Rid-A-Pest's display lets children actually hold an example of each life cycle stage.
- Digital microscope/computer where children can view worker termites.

Rid-a-Pest presents each student with a free coloring book. The teacher receives two pest books to be used in the classroom science center.