



Lions and Tigers and Bed Bugs, Oh My

A legendary circus famous for its amazing animal acts, didn't want the thrills that came with hitchhiking bed bugs.

The Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey Circus has entertained families for decades. Even watching animals file off trains that carry painted clowns, daring acrobats and the rest of the troupe throughout the country has become an event. What many fans might not know, however, is in addition to ferrying elephants, tigers, horses and a host of other animals, those trains have hosted generations of bed bugs.

The circus had tried heat and chemical treatments unsuccessfully, according to Dell Bartley's Total Control Termite and Pest Professional.

While the circus was taking a winter break, crews from Total Control traveled to Orlando and Tampa, Fla., to treat its train cars for bed bugs.

"We worked in teams, with one inside and another underneath the train car," says Bartley, owner of the 12-year-old company based in Sarasota, Fla. "Each car's drains and vents had to be sealed before they were treated with Zythor, Ensysstex's sulfuryl fluoride fumigant."

Each train car took a couple of hours to prepare and was then fumigated for 14 to 18 hours. The infestation wasn't limited to the train cars that held animals. A restaurant car and several cars in which performers lived when they were on the road also were treated.

Once the fumigation was complete, the Total Control teams brought in fans and vented the fumigant. The process took about five days to complete.

"It was amazing to watch it work," Bartley says. "Everything worked like it was supposed to."

Fumigation is a special part of the pest management industry that's not for everyone, says Bartley, whose company does about 2,000 fumigation treatments a year.

"The industry has been great to me," he says, acknowledging the Florida market is competitive. "Pull up to a red light, and you've got four trucks from competitors staring at each other. It's hard to

find a niche. Fumigation is completely separate from other types of pest control and is a bit less competitive. It's labor intensive and a specialized field. We've been blessed and lucky to find the people we have."

Well-trained technicians are well trained and have the skills to handle unusual jobs — like train cars.

"My technicians work through the rain and the dark," he says. "It takes dedication, commitment and hard work to get that done. It takes a special breed."

But whether it's fumigation or general pest control, Bartley is happy to be part of the industry.

"It's a fantastic field," he says. "I've been doing this since I was 17. There are so many spokes on the wheel when it comes to pest control. There are so many things you can market. There's always a new challenge and a new product being manufactured."

Having a partner like Ensysstex makes his job easier.

"The support I get from Ensysstex is unmatched," Bartley says. "They're part of the family. They bend over backward for us. I've never worked with a company that has supported me this way. Anything that we need, they're there."



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