



OUR STORIES, OUR SHELVES

MLA • DLA Conference 2026

Don't Miss!



50/50 RAFFLE

Tickets are \$1 each and can be purchased from **Conni Strittmatter** or **David Dahl!** The winner takes home half the pot.



PUB QUIZ

Thursday, May 7
8:00 –10:00 p.m.
Choptank Ballroom



SILENT AUCTION

Visit the Silent Auction in the exhibitor hall to place your bids **before 10 a.m. on Friday, May 8th.**



KARAOKE

Thursday, May 7
6:00 –10:00 p.m.
Windjammer



OUR STORIES, OUR SHELVES

MLA • DLA Conference 2026

How to Handle Contaminated Materials: Keeping You and the Library Safe

PRESENTERS:

**Christopher Cannon (Library Resource Supervisor)
Enoch Pratt FREE Library**

Overview

After today, participants will know how to:

- **Safely handle contaminated and infested materials Prevent the spread of mold**
- **Identify bed bugs and other critters**
- **Have those difficult conversations with customers about materials returned with pests**

Protect the library, protect the books, but most importantly...

PROTECT YOURSELF!

Safety First: Emergency Toolkit



**Large plastic bags that zip
(ideally large enough to fit
a picture book)**



**Plastic tote
(provides extra security as bed bugs as
they cannot easily climb up plastic
surfaces)**



**Isopropyl alcohol
(higher concentration is best,
spray nozzles may be easier to use,
not a solution to infestation)**



**UV Flashlight
(helps identify eggs -will
appear white under purple UV
light)**

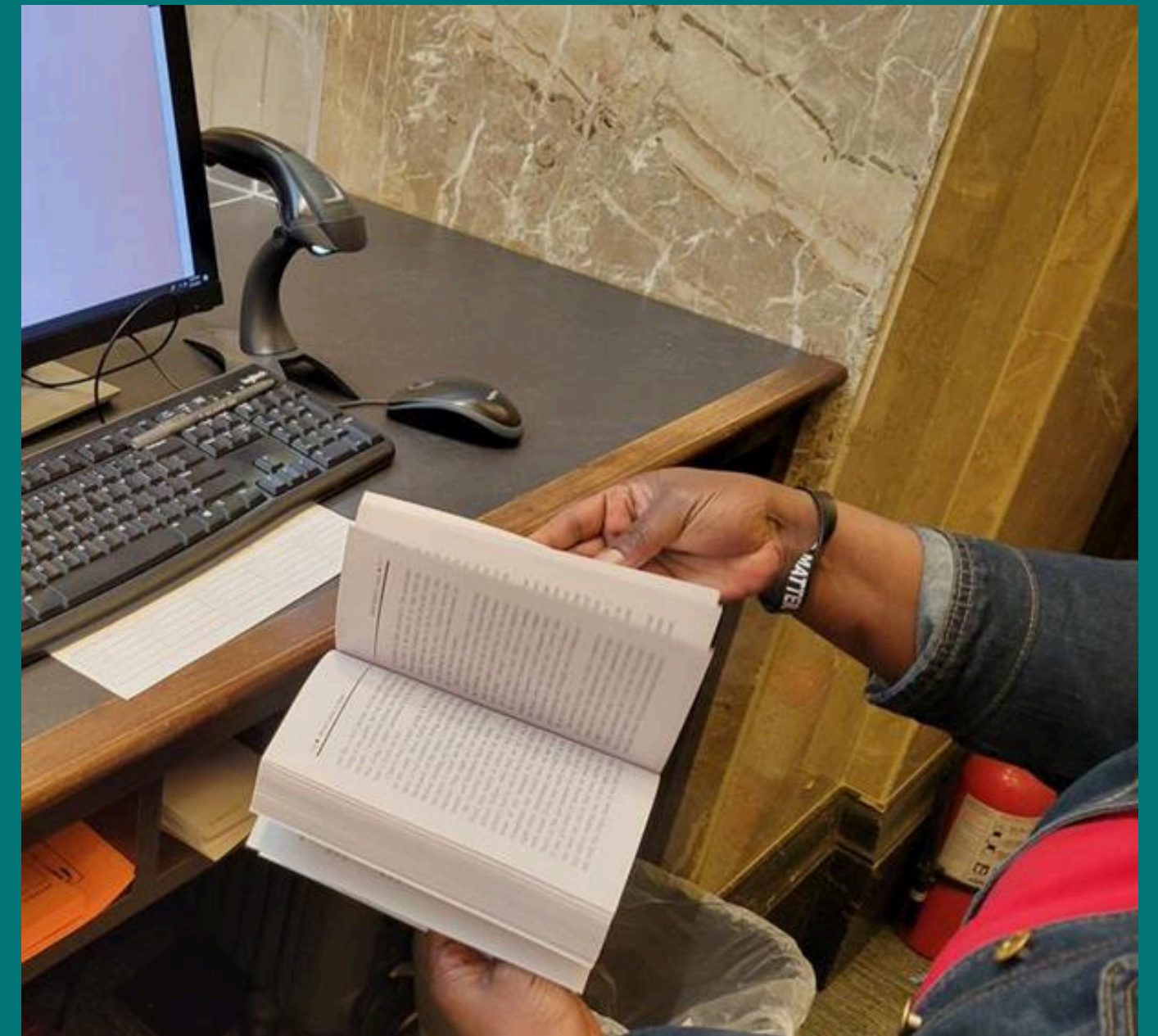
Safety First: Reviewing Materials

- **Check ALL materials before giving to a customer, discharging from an account, placing on the shelf or in a tote for another branch or system (MILO).**
- **AV materials, devices, Library of Things, etc. must all be checked.**
- **Use UV light to check for eggs in soft cases. Isolate for a week, return to collection if free of activity/visual evidence.**

Safety First: Reviewing Materials

- **We recommend working with the item at a distance from your person (using the desk to hold the item while you examine reduces contact with your clothing)**
- **You may review materials with disposable gloves as necessary**

Reviewing Materials: Check-Out and Return



Basic Tips

- **Have signage prepared in case you need to temporarily block access to your book drop.**
- **Scan the book drop for evidence of other bed bugs/eggs.**
Sanitize the book drop with isopropyl alcohol.
- **If you discover bed bugs in an item retrieved from the book drop or on a shelf, be sure to check surrounding materials for evidence of bed bugs and isolate materials as needed.**

Reviewing Library Spaces



Donations

- **Review donations as you would any incoming materials**
- **Keep away from shelving with existing collection**
- **Review for mold/pests, torn/detached/tattered covers and/or spines, excessive or offensive writing (lines, drawings, symbols, etc.)**

EPFL/SLRC Procedure

- **Staff immediately contain the contaminated item safely in a sealed plastic bag**
- **Staff alerts the supervisor, who will confirm the issue.**
- **Supervisor inspects the area after the item is removed. The affected area is sanitized with isopropyl alcohol.**
- **If infestation, notify Facilities ASAP.**

EPFL/SLRC Procedure

- **Staff take photos of items in the back office/away from the public. Staff labels plastic bag “contaminated” and places it inside the designated plastic tote.**
- **If the customer is at the desk, the supervisor briefly reviews policy and lets them know they’ll receive a letter regarding the situation.**
- **Administration will send out a letter.**

EPFL/SLRC Procedure

- **Staff member sends incident report to incident@prattlibrary.org with any photos.**
 - **Incident report reaches all managers in the library.**
- **Supervisor follows up with Facilities with a ticket to have the bin emptied and sanitized.**
- **Location follows up in bin is not emptied within (2) business days. Facilities disposes of plastic bag at the city disposal site.**

EPFL/SLRC Procedure

- **The location's Circulation Supervisor (or in charge) will place a contaminated hold on card #000000 for any remaining materials left on the customer's card at the time of the incident.**
- **Hold will be placed for the location of the incident.**
- **Once the location's staff confirms returned materials are unaffected, the hold can be removed by the supervisor.**

EPFL/SLRC Procedure

- **First Incident/Level One**
- **Circulation Manager or SLRC Manager emails the Chief Operating Officer's office to request a warning letter to be mailed.**
- **Second Incident/Level Two**
- **If a second offense, the Circulation Manager or SLRC Manager instructs the COO's office to prepare the suspension letter for the customer.**

EPFL/SLRC Procedure

- **If a customer returns multiple materials over the counter with bed bugs or confirms that they have a bed bug issue at their residence, the incident may be moved to Level Two, depending on the**
- **Circulation Manager's discretion.**

EPFL/SLRC Procedure

- **Customer Suspension**
- **Suspension applies to physical visits to the library.**
- **Customer will still have access to the digital collection while suspended. Staff may also mail any print requests during this time.**
- **The customer must bring a letter from a licensed pest control agency stating the residence has been treated to reinstate status.**

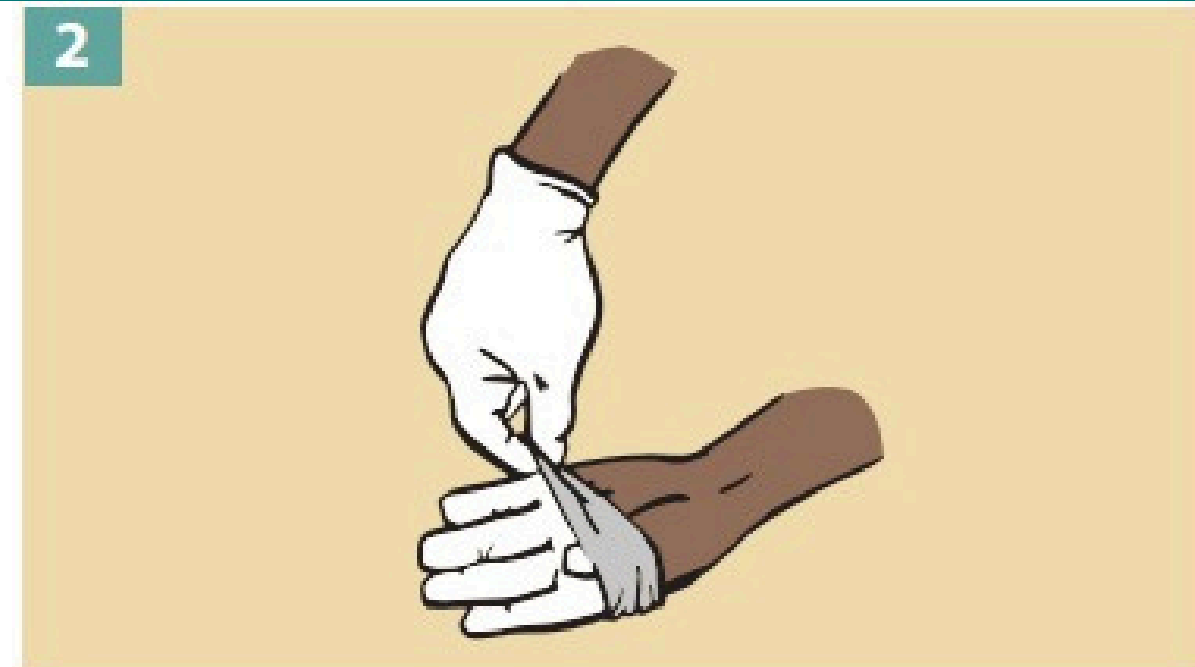
Tailoring Your Policy & Procedure for Bedbugs

- **Discuss with administration and staff to determine when a customer's level of access might be adjusted**
- **Decide which staff member (circulation supervisor, branch manager, or administration) will communicate with the customer about changes to the level of access and possible solutions**

Safety First: Removing Gloves



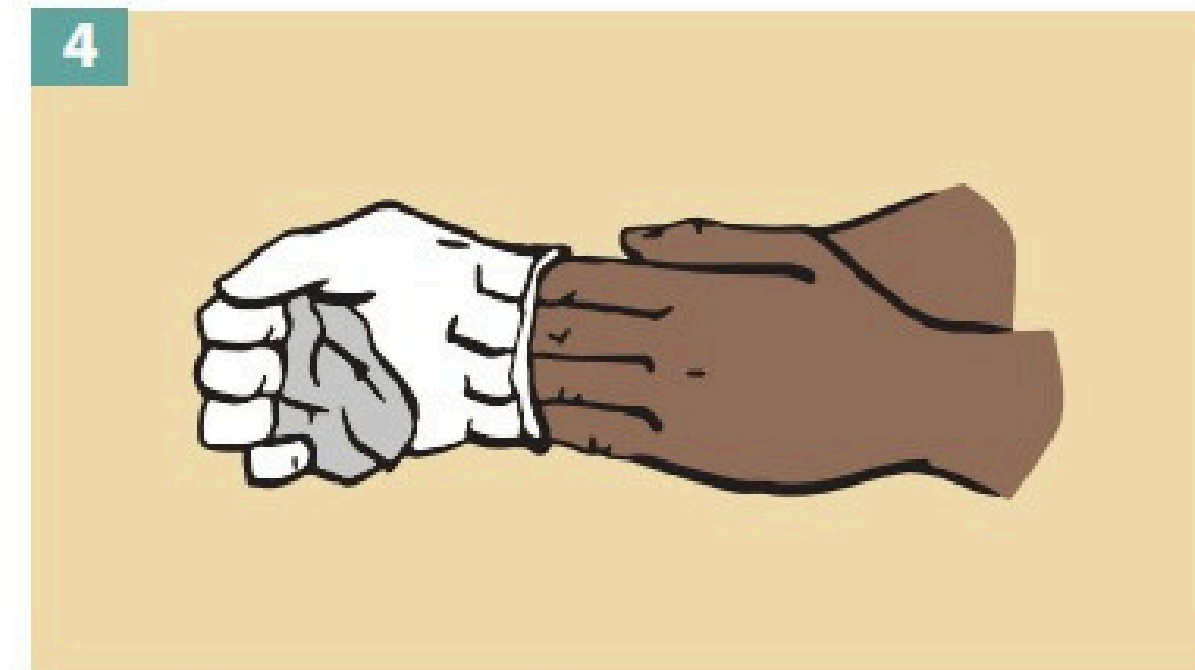
Grasp the outside of one glove at the wrist.
Do not touch your bare skin.



Peel the glove away from your body,
pulling it inside out.



Hold the glove you just removed in
your gloved hand.

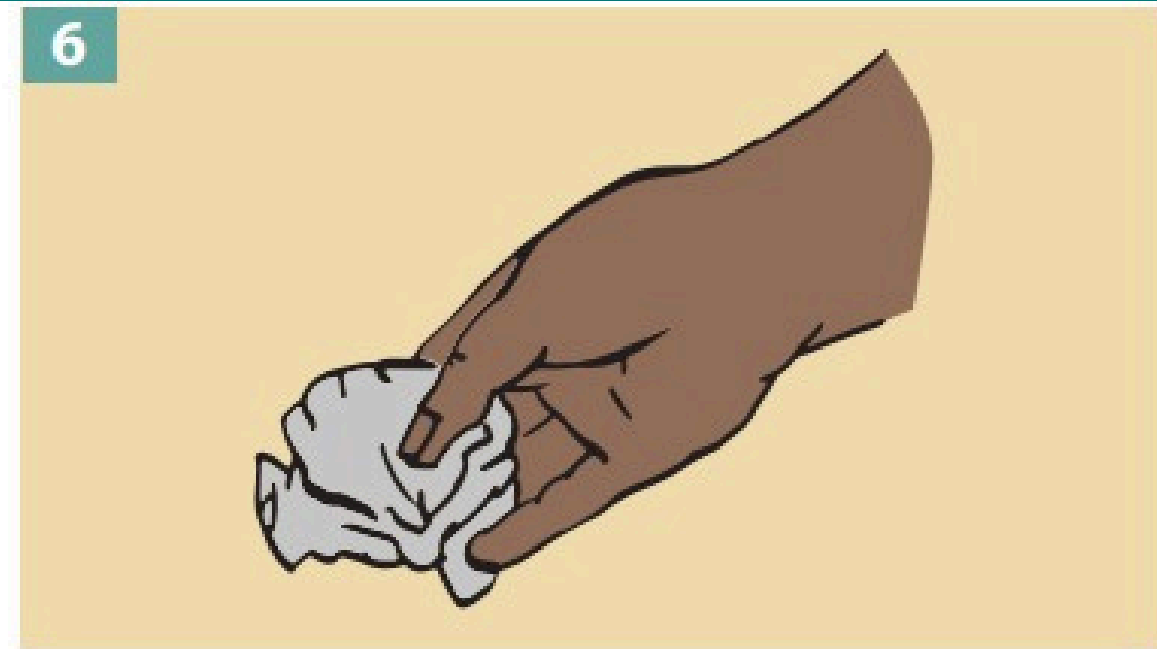


Peel off the second glove by putting your fingers
inside the glove at the top of your wrist.

Safety First: Removing Gloves



5
Turn the second glove inside out while pulling it away from your body, leaving the first glove inside the second.



6
Dispose of the gloves safely. Do not reuse the gloves.



7
Clean your hands immediately after removing gloves.

Safety First: Handwashing

- **Wet your hands with running water**
- **Apply liquid, bar, or powder soap**
- **Lather well**
- **Rub your hands vigorously for at least 20 seconds**
- **Rinse well**
- **Dry your hands with a clean or disposable towel or air dryer Use your towel to turn off the faucet**



NEDCC

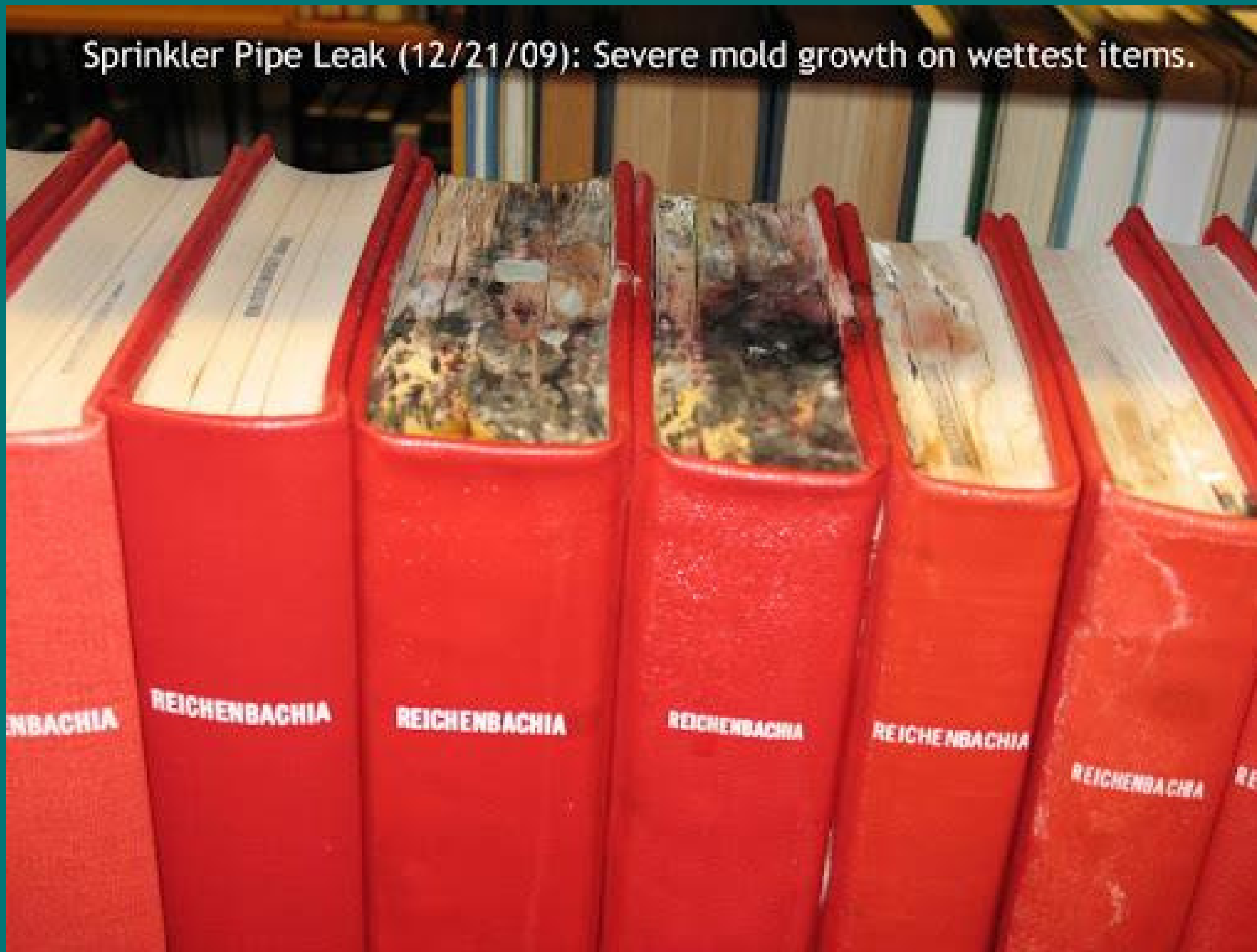
- **NEDCC -Northeast Document Conservation Center Resources on preservation**
- **Emergency management -pests**
- **Developing an integrated pest management program**
- **Steps to prevent pests from entering your buildings How to monitor your buildings**

Disasters in the Library

- **Have an action plan for collection-related disasters**
- **The NEDCC (Northeast Document Conservation Center) has plenty of resources about preservation and how to handle these situations**
- **<https://www.nedcc.org/free-resources/disaster-assistance/> Collections Emergency Hotline: 1-855-245-8303**
- **24/7 telephone advice from NEDCC staff includes drying wet collections and dealing with damage from fire, pests, and mold**

Extreme Mold Case

Sprinkler Pipe Leak (12/21/09): Severe mold growth on wettest items.



Mold Examples



Image source: <https://healthyschoolscampaign.org/blog/through-your-lens-photo-contest-the-moldy-math-book-6682/>

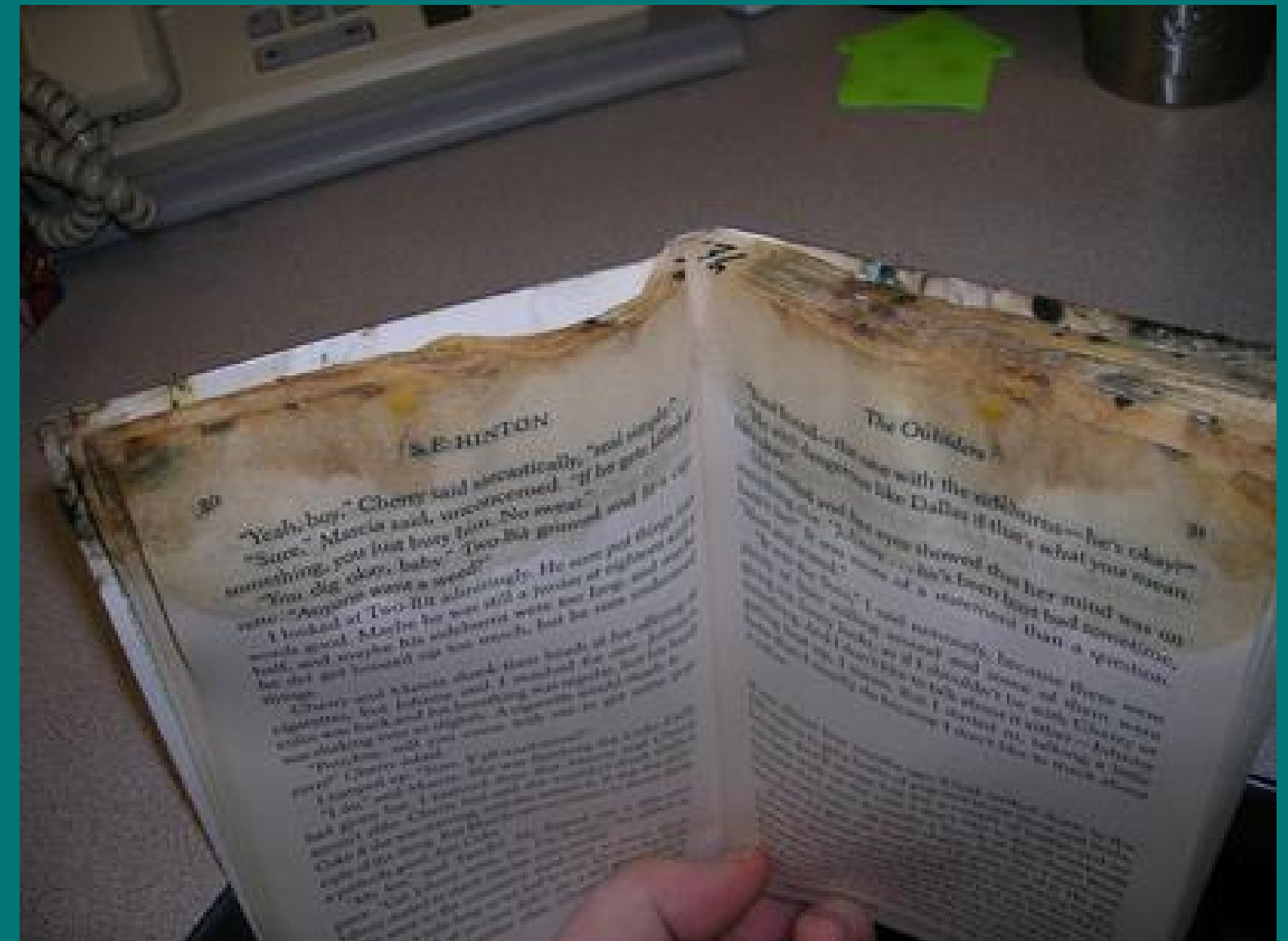


Image source: <https://www.ala.org/alcts/preservationweek/advice/moldybooks>

Is It Mold or Dirt?

- **Mold will be visible under UV light (faint yellow fluorescence)**
- **Best to test suspicious items with a UV flashlight rather than to sniff**

Active Mold

- **Web-like, bushy appearance as the mold blooms**
- **Soft, may smear when touched. May be slimy or damp to the touch**



Is It Mold or Dirt?

Inactive Mold

- **Dry and Powdery**
- **Will easily brush off materials**
- **Not immediately harmful to collections, BUT it can be spread if material is moved or if spores carry through the air- it will randomly bloom if environmental conditions are favorable (more than 65% relative humidity**
- **Best to discard unless sent for treatment to vendor (archival/special collections type items)**

Active Mold vs Inactive Mold



Active Mold Example



Inactive Mold Example

Mold Tips

- Don't brush away suspected mold - it can spread
- Make sure all materials returning to the shelf are dry
- Work in a small team to tackle a large bloom
- Log barcodes if items need to be discarded
- Bag up items safely and discard
- After removing affected materials from the shelf, check the surrounding areas for possible spread & disinfect the shelf

Mold Tips

- Briefly inspect the stacks, monitor areas where mold has developed to prevent another bloom
- Avoid storing collections in basements
- Dry dust the tops of books quarterly (a clean surface is less attractive to spores)

Fluids

- **Do not smell to assess the situation.**
- **Put on appropriate PPE and section off the affected area.**
- **Disinfect any affected areas immediately following your library's protocols, labor regulations, and health & safety standards if the suspected fluid is bodily.**
- **Blood and body fluids can contain viruses, so following safety protocols is important.**

Fluids

- **Discard any materials with affected pages, paperback covers, or cloth parts. Seal in a plastic bag and discard accordingly.**
- **When suitable, use an EPA-approved disinfectant on plastic covers for the directed amount of dwell time (the time required for something to be visibly wet before wiping away).**

Rodents

- **Always wear gloves when handling these situations, and wash your hands after.**
- **Isolate affected items for 1 week to allow the potential virus to no longer be infectious.**
- **Once excreted into the environment by the rodent, hantaviruses can survive in the environment and remain infectious for a period of 2-3 days.**

Rodents

- **You can also leave books, papers, and other items that cannot be cleaned with a liquid disinfectant outdoors in the sunlight for several hours (this may not be feasible). Otherwise, quarantine in an indoor area free of rodents for 1 week.**
- **Ultraviolet rays in sunlight inactivate hantaviruses.**
- **Wipe plastic areas with a cloth moistened with disinfectant.**

Rodents

- **Before cleaning the affected area (e.g., stacks), ventilate the space for at least 30 minutes if possible.**
- **Do NOT stir up dust by sweeping or vacuuming up droppings or urine.**
- **A mask will provide some protection against dust and mold, but may not necessarily protect against viruses, depending on the quality/level of the mask.**

Rodents

- **Spray the urine and droppings with a disinfectant or a mixture of bleach (1 part) and water (10 parts) and let soak for 5 minutes.**
- **Use a paper towel to pick up the waste, and dispose of it in the garbage.**
- **Finally, clean and disinfect the whole area.**
- **Mop floors and clean countertops (e.g., shelving) with disinfectant or bleach solution.**

Bed Bugs, Oh My!

"The bed bug resurgence of the past decade is not a passing phase; bed bugs will continue to be a fact of life for the foreseeable future, and all libraries should have a plan in place to deal with introductions as they occur."

Sarah Kittrell, Wichita Public Library



Did You Know?

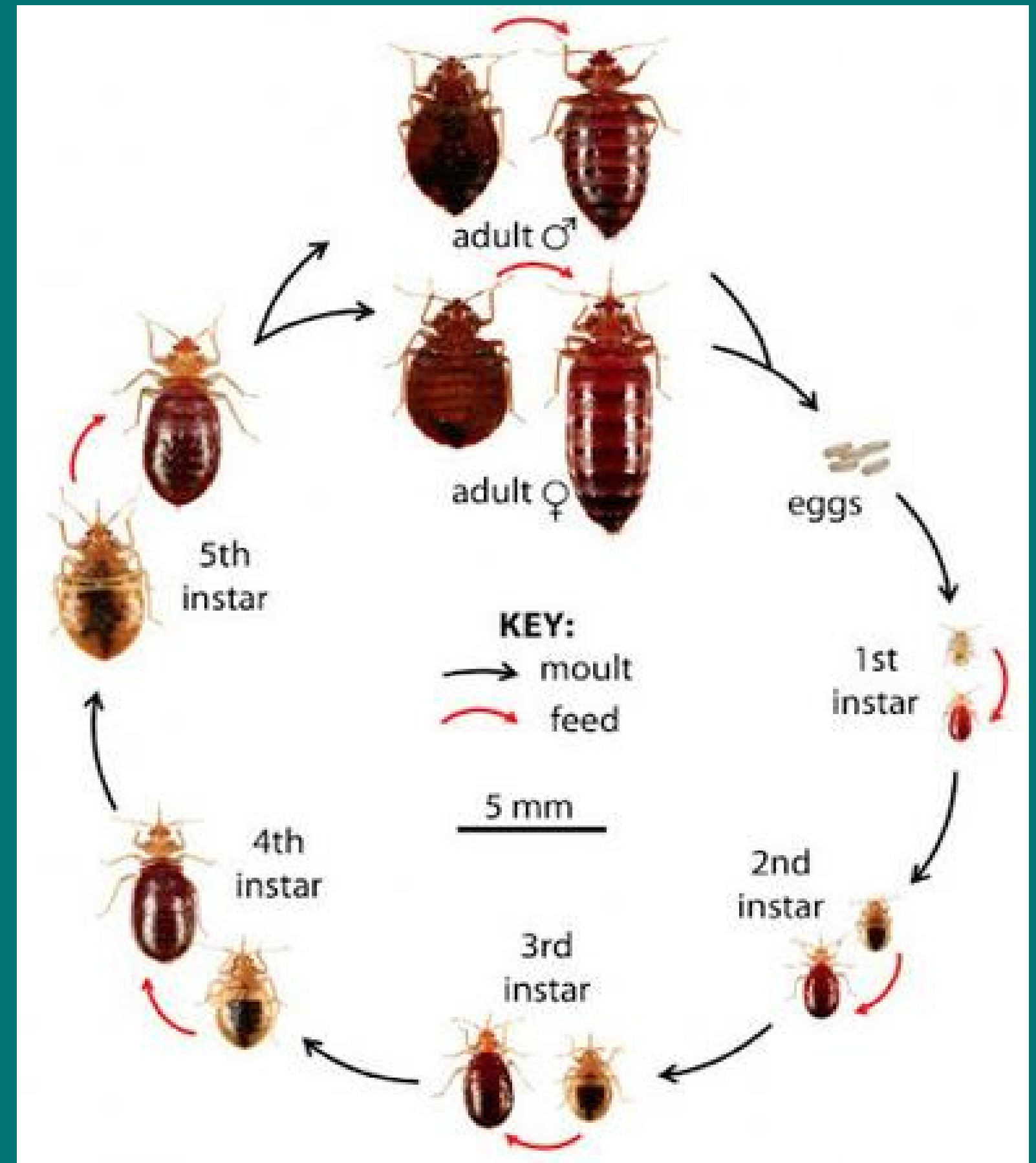
- **Bed bugs can populate even the cleanest environment.**
- **The spread by hitch hiking on clothing, bags, and even books. They can hide in places as narrow as the width of a credit card.**

Bed Bug Characteristics

- **Flat, oval-shaped body about the size and shape of an apple seed**
- **6 legs**
- **No wings - bed bugs cannot fly**
- **Adults are a reddish-brown color**
- **Young bugs are light tan and translucent**
- **Eggs - small and translucent/white**
- **Antennae no longer than half the length of the body**
- **No cerci (small appendages at the end of the body)**

A (Bed) Bug's Life

- Color and shape change after feeding
- Molting occurs between life stages Cast skins indicate an infestation



Bed Bugs in Books

Indicators and key areas to search:

- **Dark spots or stains where they may have been crushed**
- **Small stains or droppings**
- **Dead bugs, eggs, or shells may be found**

Check:

- **Crevices of the spine**
- **Dust jacket**



Don't Let the Bed Bugs Bite



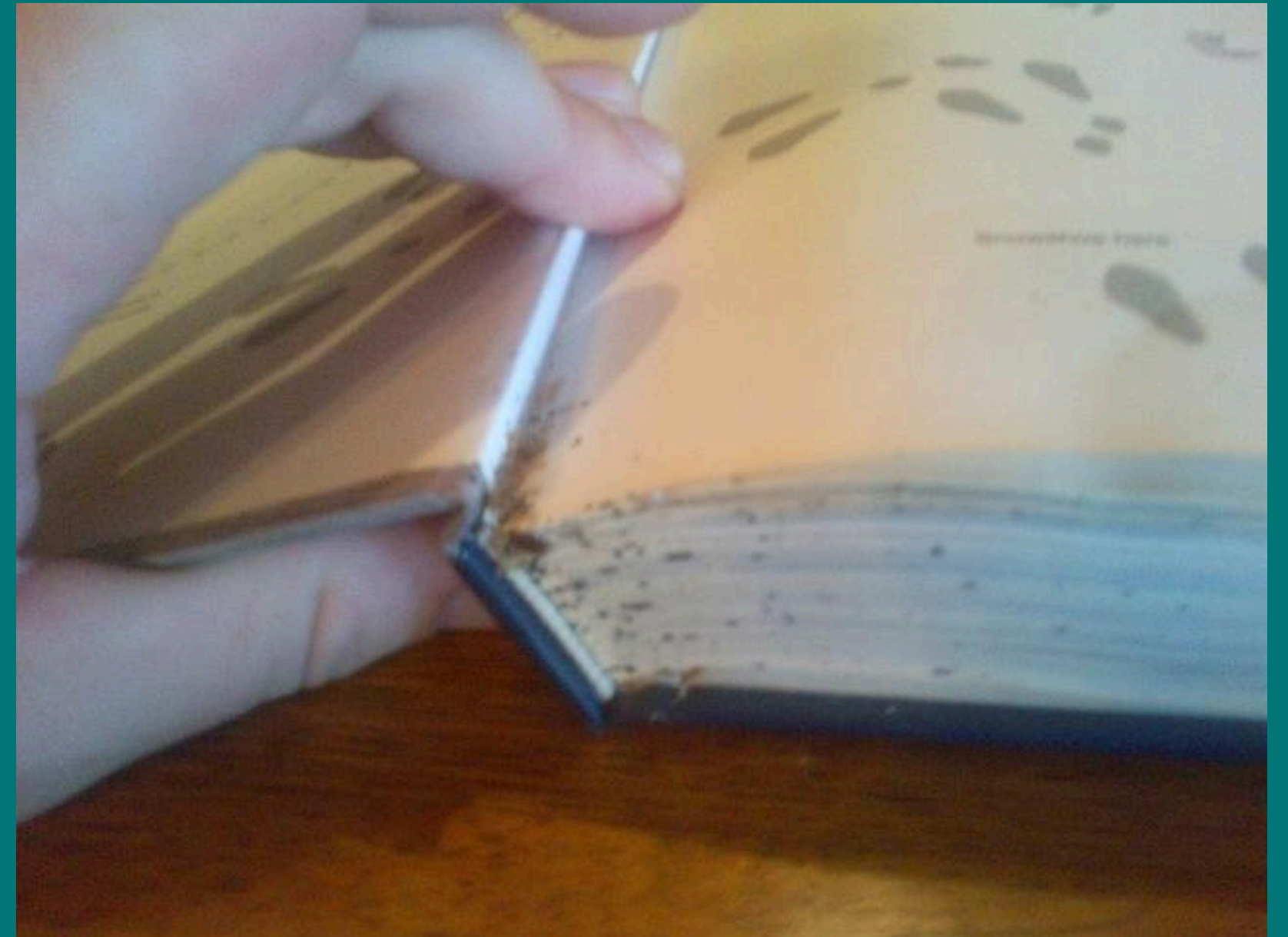
The difference between common bug bites

	 Bed bug bites	 Flea bites	 Mosquito bites
LOCATION	Usually abdomen or arms(upper body)	Usually ankles or feet(lower body)	Can be anywhere
SIZE	Multiple big bites	Many small bites	Fewer big bites
PATTERN	Grouped together in a zig-zag or line	Grouped together, may form a pattern	No pattern

Don't Let the Bed Bugs Bite



Bed Bugs in Books



Bed Bugs in Books



Best Practice for the Management of Bed Bugs

Quick identification is key:

- **Isolate materials immediately. Seal the item securely in a plastic bag and place it in a sealed, smooth plastic bin.**
- **Don't discard bugs that you find in other areas of the library. If you think it is a bed bug, secure it between tape/paper, and put it into a ziploc bag (pest control may want to confirm).**
- **Use only trained and knowledgeable pest control services. NEVER TREAT an infestation with over-the-counter sprays or bombs (they may make the infestation worse).**

Approaches to Treatment of Materials

- **Discard materials - in most cases, this may be the easiest and most efficient method**
- **Heat**
- **113° F - 7 hours**
- **118° F - 90 minutes**
- **122° F - 1 minute**
- **Freezing**
- **0° F for at least 4 days**

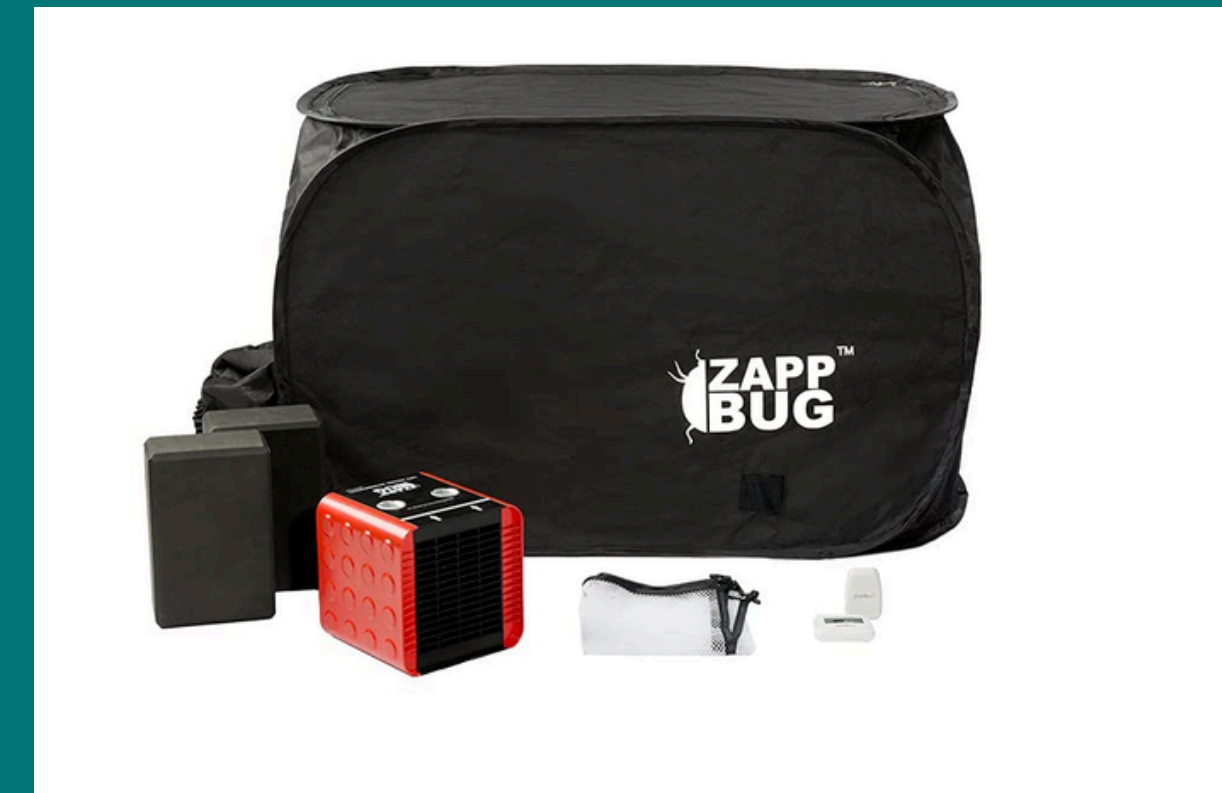
Marina & OCLC Items



- Follow EPFL Contaminated Materials Policy 4.77c on the Vine
- Photograph each book band, including Marina/OCLC number
- Send an email to milo@prattlibrary.org with an explanation of the materials' condition
- If you can't get a clear photo of the band, include request numbers in your email
- Dispose of Contaminated Materials in accordance with policy 4.77c DO NOT SEND BACK THROUGH DELIVERY
- Milo will attach bills to the customer's record afterward

Considerations for Heat Treatment

- If there is spotting/evidence left behind, you would not want to circulate.
- ZappBug Heater is ~\$230 per unit
- Do you have the space or ideal environment for a bed bug heater in the workroom?
- Do you have the time/resources to monitor the heater?
- Certain materials (e.g., vinyl records) cannot be placed in the heater



Is it a Bed Bug... or Not?

Bed bug



Flea



CARPET BEETLE

BED BUG

TICK



VS

BED BUG



Bedbug



VS.

Cockroach



The Bed Bug's Relatives

Bat bugs' preferred hosts are bats

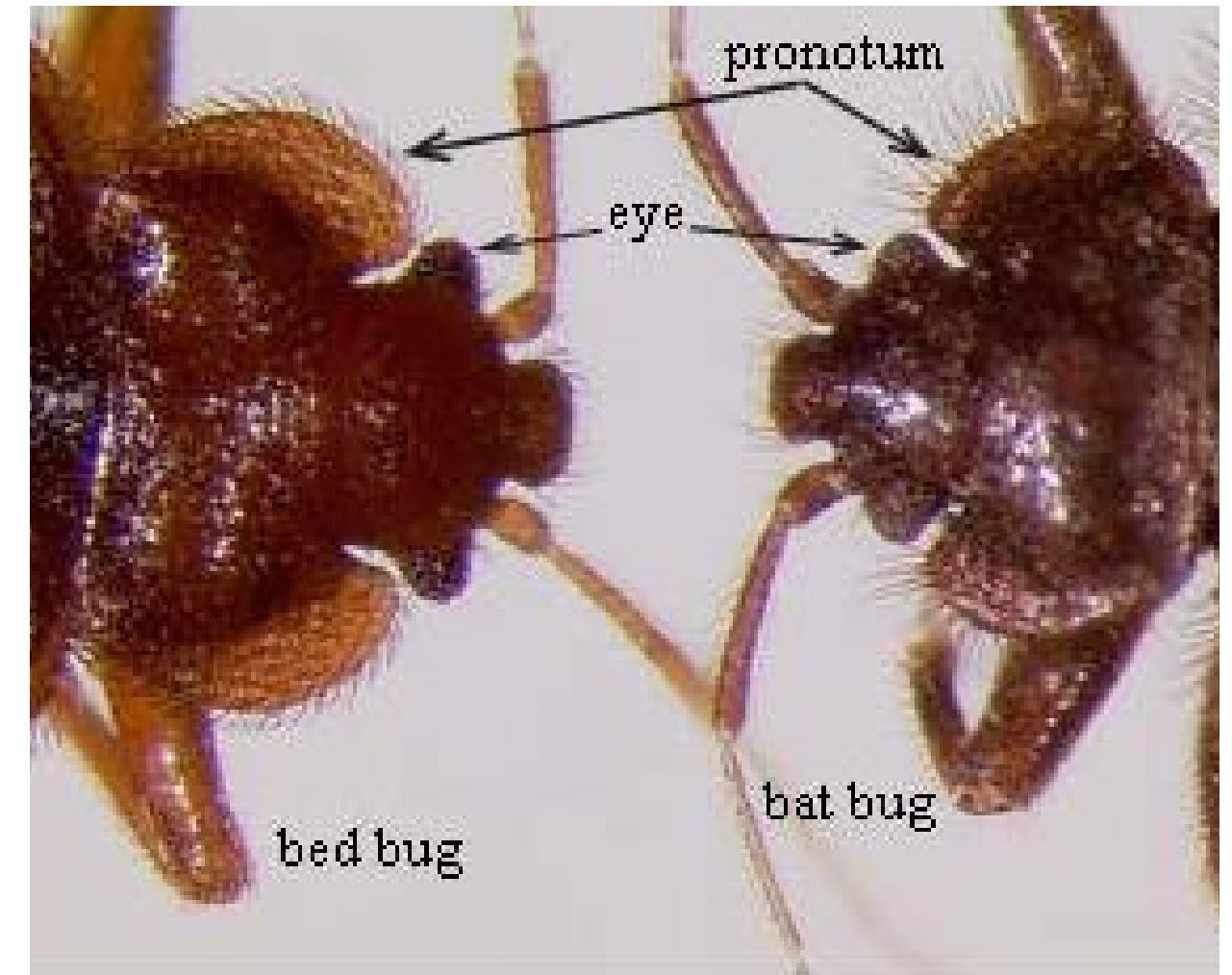
- **Very similar in appearance to bed bugs - more likely to encounter bed bugs than a bat bug at this time.**
- **Pest control can confirm before infestation treatment (differences can be microscopic)**
- **May bite humans, but cannot solely survive off of them - will die off without their designated source**

Bed Bug vs. Bat Bug

Bed bug



Bat bug



The fringe hairs on the pronotum of the bat bug (R) are as long or longer than the width of the eye; the thorax fringe-hairs are shorter in the bed bug (L). From Ohio State University Extension Fact Sheet "Bat Bugs" (HYG-2105A-05)

Effects of Infestation

- **Having bed bugs in the home, especially for long periods of time, may cause psychological effects and negatively impact mental health.**

Reported problems include:

- **Anxiety**
- **Lack of sleep**
- **Paranoia**
- **Decreased social life (no visits to the home)**

Communicating with Customers

- **Communicate openly and politely with customers if they return their items with bed bugs.**
- **Ask politely if they knew the possible cause**
- **They may not have realized they had the issue**
- **Customer may be aware of the issue**
- **Be prepared for a general mix of reactions (embarrassment, anger, fear)**

Communicating with Customers

- **Reassure the customer with empathy**
- **Steps are being taken to protect the library, not to shame anyone - this can happen to anyone**
- **Provide the customer with treatment resources**
- **Does the local health department have any bed bug mitigation programs?**

Resources Available for Customers

- **If the customer lives in a multi-family complex (apartment), the landlord may be responsible for treatment**
- **Contact Maryland Legal Aid if the landlord doesn't take responsibility <https://www.mdlab.org/>**
- **Check for updates with your local health department on how to handle bed bugs**

Preventing the Spread

- **Keep the material inspection area free of clutter and personal items**
- **Seal away/contain contaminated materials immediately**
- **Dry the clothes you wore to work on high heat for at least 60 minutes if you think you came in contact with bed bugs. Do this before placing in the washing machine.**

Preventing the Spread

- **Do not send contaminated materials back in totes to other branches or other library systems**
- **OCLC ITEMS-contact MILO to find out replacement costs**
- **MARINA ITEMS-Directly contact the lending library about replacement costs and notify them material was discarded**

Additional Tips

- **Keep the policy and procedures up-to-date as the information may change.**
- **Create a 'cheat sheet' for quick and easy action.**
- **Post resources in shared area.**
- **Consider policy for staff.**
- **If staff have pest problem at home, should they return to work?
Can they telework until issue is resolved?**
- **What would you do if staff self-disclosed?**

Additional Tips

- **Consider placing sticky strips at the bottom of book returns and other key areas.**
- **This will help trap and identify pests - pest control management may also handle this.**
- **For conferences (or personal trips), complete bed bug checks in hotels before settling into the room.**
- **Keep personal items off of fabric-covered areas in public spaces when possible.**

ACT

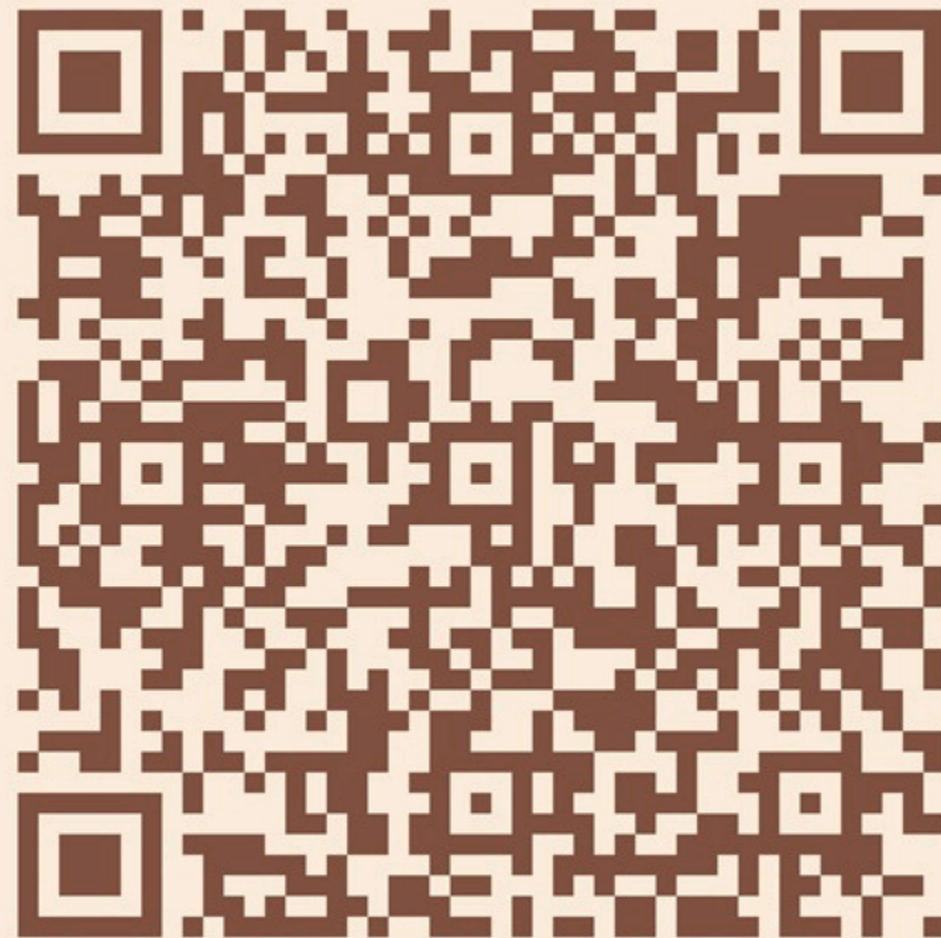
- **ASSESS** the situation, refer to the policy that is in place
- **CONTAIN** the object, pest, or offending item
- **TELL** the necessary parties and individuals

Thank you!

Christopher Cannon

Ccannon@prattlibrary.org

**Please take a moment to
complete the program survey.**



SCAN ME!



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