



INTERGRATED PEST MANAGEMENT PROGRAM

What is IPM?

Integrated Pest Management (IPM) is an effective and environmentally sensitive approach to pest management that relies on a combination of common-sense practices. IPM programs use current, comprehensive information on the life cycles of pests and their interaction with the environment. This information, in combination with available pest control methods, is used to manage pest damage by the most economical means, and with the least possible hazard to people, property, and the environment.

How do IPM programs work?

IPM is not a single pest control method but, rather, a series of pest management evaluations, decisions and controls. In practicing IPM, managers who are aware of the potential for pest infestation follow a four-tiered approach. The four steps include:

- 1. Set Action Thresholds:** Before taking any pest control action, IPM first sets an action threshold, a point at which pest populations or environmental conditions indicate that pest control action must be taken. Sighting a single pest does not always mean control is needed. The level at which pests will become a threat is critical to guiding pest control decisions.
- 2. Monitor and Identify Pests:** Not all insects, diseases, or other living organisms require control. Organisms may be inoperable, innocuous, or even beneficial. IPM programs work to monitor for pests and identify them accurately, so that appropriate control decisions can be made in conjunction with action thresholds. This monitoring and identification removes the possibility that pesticides will be used when they are not really needed or that the wrong kind of pesticide will be used.
- 3. Prevention:** Cultural recommendations act as a first line of pest control. While implemented most effectively during the planning stages of a landscape, established landscapes nonetheless provide opportunities. These control methods can be very effective and cost-efficient and present little to no risk to people or the environment.
- 4. Control** Once monitoring, identification, and action thresholds indicate that pest control is required, and preventive methods are no longer effective or available, IPM programs then evaluate the proper control method both for effectiveness and risk. Effective, less risky pest controls are chosen first. If further monitoring identifications and action thresholds indicate that less risky controls are not working, then additional pest control methods would be employed, such as targeted spraying of pesticides. Broadcast spraying of non-specific pesticides is a last resort.