

What is IPM?

Integrated Pest Management (IPM) is a way to control pests while minimizing risks to you, your pets, and your environment.

It is rarely necessary, or even possible, to totally eliminate a pest. Among the few exceptions are cockroaches, fleas, and ants in the house.

Plants and pets can often tolerate pests better than you think. The situation may look worse than it actually is. IPM provides a means of making more rational decisions about pest control.

Key elements of IPM:

Prevention. Cultural and physical control practices begin before pest problems are encountered.

Observation. Careful examination and proper pest identification lead to the most effective control methods.

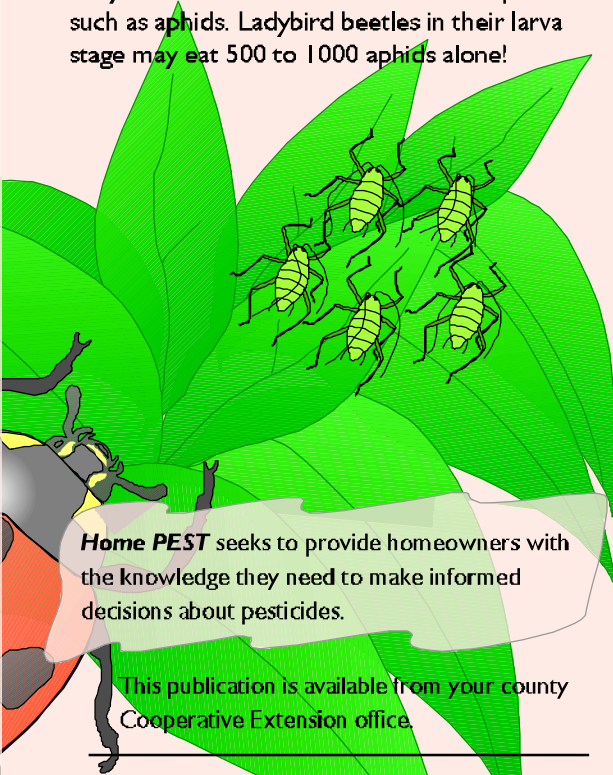
Setting thresholds. Knowing the limit of how many pests can be tolerated determines if further action is necessary.

Take action. When a threshold level has been, or is likely to be, reached biological controls are equally as important as chemical controls.

Implementing an IPM program is an ongoing process. Evaluate the success of these key elements and repeat or adjust them as needed. This allows your IPM plan to continually improve and adapt to changing situations.

Did you know . . .

Ladybird beetles eat soft-bodied insect pests such as aphids. Ladybird beetles in their larva stage may eat 500 to 1000 aphids alone!



Home PEST seeks to provide homeowners with the knowledge they need to make informed decisions about pesticides.

This publication is available from your county Cooperative Extension office.

The Home PEST project was developed by the University of Wisconsin-Extension Pesticide Applicator Training (PAT) program.

Any reference to pesticide products are for your convenience and are not an endorsement or criticism of one product over other similar products.

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Start an IPM plan for your home



Home PEST

Home Pesticide Education & Safety Training
University of Wisconsin-Extension

Prevention

Cultural control seeks to provide the plants and animals with a healthy growing environment.

To prevent pest outbreaks from occurring, consider the following:

- fertilization
- watering
- site selection
- plant selection
- sanitation (especially related to fleas and pantry pests)

Physical control is another preventative strategy. Items to consider are:

- screens, floating row covers, or food containers with tight-fitting lids which act as barriers to pests.
- traps, baits, lures, and physical repellents.
- mulches to reduce weed growth and maintain adequate soil temperature and moisture.
- proper pet grooming to reduce problems with fleas and ticks.

Information about specific plants and animals is available through your county Cooperative Extension office, local garden center, or veterinarian.

Observation

Many different pests may pose a problem in and around your home. Properly identify the problem and the cause before deciding what action, if any, is needed.

Carefully examine the affected area for clues:

- What symptoms appear on your lawn, garden, or houseplant?
- Is your cat or dog scratching more than usual?
- Do you notice small, brown moths in your kitchen or pantry?
- Do you notice ants in the house?
- Could the problem be caused by too little or too much water, fertilizer, or sun?

Setting thresholds

Don't base pest management programs on total elimination of a pest. If you identify a pest as the cause, the next step is to determine the extent of the damage.

- Is the pest truly a problem?
- Can the plant or pet tolerate the pest?
- Can you tolerate the pest?
- Are conditions right for the rapid spread of the problem?

After you have determined the tolerance level (also called the threshold), you may select a pest management option that will keep damage below that level.

Take action

Biological control uses beneficial insects to control outdoor pests. This strategy requires that you:

- tolerate the helpful insects and some of the pest insects that they need for food.
- use insecticides which kill only the target pest, not beneficial insects.
- provide food and shelter for the beneficial insects (e.g., flowering plants which provide nectar).



Chemical control is used when other control measures are not fully effective or practical. It is important that you:

- treat only the areas where the pest is present.
- apply pesticides when they are most effective. Certain stages in a pest's life cycle are more susceptible to control than others. Understand the pest's life cycle before using pesticides.
- select a pesticide that is pest specific; remember, do not kill the good insects.
- always read the label before purchasing any pesticide. When making a pesticide application, always follow the label directions exactly. For more information on pesticide labels, see Home PEST brochure #5, "Reading a Pesticide Label."