

What is IPM?

Integrated pest management (IPM) involves the use of environmentally sound yet effective practices to keep pests from invading or damaging your home, garden, or landscape. IPM usually combines several methods for long-term pest prevention and management without harming you, your family, or the environment. Successful pest management begins with correctly identifying the pest and selecting the appropriate and most effective methods and materials.

Pest prevention and control around the home and landscape includes:

- Monitoring for the presence of pests and their damage.
- Altering the home or garden environment to deprive pests of food, water, and shelter.
- Keeping pests out by using barriers, screens, and caulk.
- Planting pest-resistant or well-adapted plant varieties, such as native plants.
- Discouraging various pests by modifying the way you design, irrigate, fertilize, and manage your garden.
- Squashing, trapping, washing off, or pruning out pests; using mulch for weed control.
- Encouraging beneficial insects to live in your garden.

Biological control

Most gardens contain far more “good bugs,” or beneficial insects, than pest insects. Beneficial insects and other organisms (also called natural enemies) kill pests and play an important role in IPM. Help beneficials by choosing plants that provide pollen and nectar, by keeping ants out of pest-infested plants, and by avoiding the use of certain pesticides that kill or harm them.

What about pesticides?

- Most pests can be managed without using pesticides.
- Use pesticides only if nonchemical controls are ineffective and monitoring confirms that pests are reaching intolerable or damaging levels.
- If pesticides are necessary, use them in combination with the nonchemical methods described above.
- Choose pesticides carefully. Use the least toxic, yet effective material that targets the pests but has little impact on human health and the environment.
- Examples of least toxic pesticides include:
 - Soaps and oils
 - Microbials such as *Bacillus thuringiensis* (Bt) and spinosad
 - Borate products in bait stations for ants
 - Dusts such as borate or silica in cracks or crevices for household pests

Minimize the use of pesticides that pollute our waterways. Use nonchemical alternatives or less toxic pesticide products whenever possible. *Read product labels carefully* and follow instructions on proper use, storage, and disposal.