

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.

Identify your pest correctly.

Identify your pest to be sure the management method you choose will be effective. If you aren't sure what your pest is, use the tools on this Web site or contact your local UC Cooperative Extension Office for help. Find out if the pest is a problem that needs to be controlled and learn about its life cycle and biology.

Determine if there are preventive or nonchemical methods you can use to reduce the problem.

For best results, combine several methods from the following categories:

Prevention

Prevent pests from invading or building up their populations in the first place. This might include removing the pests' sources of food, water, and shelter, or blocking their access into buildings or plants.

Cultural controls

Cultural practices are things you can do to discourage pest invasion such as good sanitation, removing debris and infested plant material, proper watering and fertilizing, growing competitive plants, or using pest resistant plants.

Physical or mechanical controls

Control pests with physical methods or mechanical devices such as knocking pests off of plants with a spray of water, using barriers and traps, cultivating, soil solarization, or heat treatments.

Biological control

Biological control is the use of beneficial organisms (called natural enemies) to manage pests. Encourage natural enemies by planting flowering and nectar-producing plants and avoiding the use of broad-spectrum pesticides.

If effective nonchemical methods are not available, consider using pesticides.

Pesticides

Pesticides can be part of IPM, but use them only as a last resort and only after you have tried other methods. Be sure that your pest problem is serious enough to warrant a pesticide treatment. Always use the least toxic, yet effective, materials available and use them in ways that reduce human and pet exposure and protect the environment.

Combine pesticide treatments with other preventive methods

Once pests are controlled, use preventive non-chemical methods to keep them from coming back.

For more information, go to: ipm.ucanr.edu

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