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## Past Issues

### Online Training Available:

<https://eces.ifas.ufl.edu/>

### Pest Management in and Around Structures:

<http://www.eXtension.org/>

### Contact Us:

<http://schoolipm.ifas.ufl.edu/>

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## Florida School IPM Focus- Landscaping

It seems like we always have landscaping to do, not just at home but also around the schools we visit. Maintaining landscaping is not just important from an aesthetic standpoint (beautification) or a safety standpoint (increasing visibility, minimizing hiding places for 2 legged pests) it is also important from a pest control perspective. A cornerstone of any IPM program is to minimize pests and the first way we try to do that is by minimizing the routes of entry into a building. In this issue we will focus on several landscaping practices that can help your IPM program become more successful.

As always for more information on other pests or on developing an IPM program please visit our [website](#).

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## Identification of Landscape Issues

The first step in IPM is to identify the insect you are working with and to determine if it is in fact a pest. The next step is to determine if there are any cultural (maintenance) practices you can change, this can make an area less suitable for the pest to live and reproduce. It is important in landscapes to minimize piles of debris that can harbor rodents and snakes and to remove any containers with standing water to minimize mosquitoes. We often ask people to "think like a pest". Do this while you walk around the structures on your property. Do you see anything that might make the area more suitable to pest development? In the next article "Know the Facts: Protect the Seal" we will cover the top items you should consider when you are walking your property along with some simple changes you can start now that will begin to minimize the pest pressure you experience over the summer months.

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## Know the Facts: Protecting the Seal



- Look for plants that are touching the siding on your building. Trim plant at least 24 inches away from the sides of walls and windows. This will help with ant control and prevent other insects from crawling up your plants and on your walls.
- Do you have trees overhanging or touching the roof? This can give insects and rodents access to your structure.
- Are the teachers feeding the birds? If so don't let the fallen food accumulate on the ground. It will attract rodents and they can attract snakes.
- Evaluate the effectiveness of your landscape treatment with continued monitoring. In Florida, plants grow fast so this aspect of your program will require some vigilance.

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## Emphasis on Inspection

**Inspecting is pest management.** Some of the areas we listed in “Know the Facts: Protect the Seal” will require additional time to inspect. While you are out observing issues that may arise in the landscape be sure to take time to observe other outdoor features that need maintenance.



- As always look for any trees or shrubs that are touching the building or overhanging the roof.
- Look for weeds that are growing along the foundation and up the side of the building. Creeping vines can be a control nightmare, vigilance is key. Remember as part of an IPM program weed management should focus on mechanical control (hand pulling usually) with herbicides being used as a last resort. If you start small and keep weeds from maturing and forming seeds you will be on your way to a weed free school.
- Check that screening on soffits is intact, look for weak areas or areas with chew marks, rodent rubs or bird activity.
- Are the windows closing properly or do you see gaps that you should report to maintenance? The same goes for doors and door sweeps.
- Check that trashcans are clean and have lids.
- Make a note of any areas where wasps are forming nests and schedule a treatment.

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## News!

We hope you will submit news items and would be happy to help you write a story if you have an idea but don't have the time to write up the information. This newsletter will be published as content arrives, please keep the information flowing! Please send news items to **Jennifer Gillett-Kaufman**.

Visit our website for back issues of **Florida School IPM News**.