



Green Schools



Figure 1. IPM Tools



Figure 2. No Idle Zone



Figure 3. Monitoring for pests



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A variety of “green,” or environmentally safer products are in use everywhere, including pest management products at educational institutions. The presidents of 284 higher education institutions around the country have signed pledges that their colleges and universities will be committed to greener campuses through a “climate neutral” initiative. Your school district may be considering a similar pledge.

Green pest control products are found in grocery stores, hardware stores, home improvement stores, and large retail stores. Just about any store that sells traditional pest control supplies is now offering a selection of green products. In fact, the world’s largest retailer, Wal-Mart, declared that they and their suppliers are “going green.” Suppliers to the pest management industry are also offering more green products. Some of the new green pest control products are made from substances such as plant oil extracts, citrus oil, spices, and natural earth minerals. Many include easily recognized botanical spices and extracts such as rosemary, thyme, clove oil, peppermint, and wintergreen. There are a variety of everyday household cleaning products that are very effective at killing insects on contact.

The application of green pest control products are only a small part of an overall green pest control program. In most instances, the application of products is the last step in the process. The green pest control process is also known as Integrated Pest Management (IPM). IPM is a process where pest management becomes an integrated program involving a variety of techniques that enlist the cooperation of residents, maintenance staff, management, and the pest management professional. The basis of the IPM program is to reduce the use of chemicals as a means of preventing or controlling pests. Dr. Faith Oi, Director of the Florida School IPM program, states that “IPM is a process for balancing the risks between pests and pesticides to achieve long term pest suppression. Control strategies in an IPM program extend beyond the application of pesticides to include structural and procedural modifications that reduce the food, water, harborage, and access used by pests.” If pests can be excluded with maintenance to doors, windows, and structural penetrations, the ultimate goal of reduced chemical applications will be reached. Insects and rodents live naturally in the outdoor environment and only become pests when they find an avenue into the living space of residences and workplaces.

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Another perspective on the same theme is offered by Eugene Macario, University of Michigan. He states that “IPM is a planned pest control program in which various methods are integrated and used to keep pests from causing economic, health related or aesthetic injury.” Mr. Macario further states that an IPM system typically “will have eight non-chemical treatment methods preferred in the pest control industry that are: sanitation, interception, exclusion, harborage removal, habitat modification, trapping, monitoring, and vacuuming.” Simply stated, the IPM process is designed to keep pests out. If pests do gain entry, deny them food and shelter.

The first attempts at eliminating pests are mechanical removal and then monitoring. The IPM process is not the monthly spraying of areas to prevent pests. The most often utilized tool of the IPM practitioner is the sticky glue board monitor. A scheduled inspection of well-placed glue board monitors will provide the information that is needed for proper pest management. These inspections provide early indications of insect activity prior to potential problems or infestation. An additional element of the IPM process is the coordination and cooperation between the pest management professional and the client. A great example of this is provided by Vicki Copeland, Assistant Director of Residence Life University at Southern Mississippi University. She said, “Our contracted pest control company has a Technician and Management Intervention program. The technician meets with me and provides information on sanitation, exclusion, and other items that we, as a facility, need to address.” Together they stay on top of the issues that help keep pests to a minimum and ultimately reduce the need for chemical applications.

Creating an IPM program is challenging yet rewarding and attainable for all. The challenge for institutions with in-house pest management services are far less than for those institutions that use outside contractors for this service. Both need to designate IPM coordinators.

For institutions that provide in-house pest services this may be a full time position. At other institutions that contract for pest control services, this may be an additional duty for a staff member. The success of the IPM program depends on the knowledge and dedication of the IPM coordinator. Most of the information necessary to become an informed IPM coordinator is available online or through the campus entomology department.

Now is the time for all institutions to examine pest control programs and begin the greening process. Significant factors are aligning that will assist in this process. The pest management industry is poised to be a partner in the process, manufacturers are providing more green products each year, and institutional leaders are eager to proceed toward a greener campus. Take the step and designate an IPM coordinator and start the education process of creating an IPM program. Teachers, staff, students and the environment will all benefit from a greener program.

Wayne Walker

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IPM INFORMATION

National School IPM <http://schoolipm.ifas.ufl.edu/>

IPM in Schools Texas <http://schoolipm.tamu.edu/resources.htm>

IPM Institute of North America www.ipminstitute.org/

National Pest Management www.whatisipm.org/

Association IPM site

EPA schools www.epa.gov/pesticides/ipm/schoolipm/index.html



For more information about IPM in schools, or to view past issues of the Pest Press, please visit

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

The pest press newsletter is available as a document file that can be customized for your school or classroom use. Please visit the school IPM site for more details and a list of newsletter topics

For further information about the IPM program at your school or in your county, contact your county Extension Agent or the school IPM Coordinator. For county agent contact information, please visit

<http://solutionsforyourlife.com>.

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