

Torri Shelley

Get Tough on Pests in Schools

Adopting IPM in Schools: The goal of IPM is to provide children and other school users with a healthy place to learn and work. IPM prevents and solves pest problems using safe and effective strategies.

In a school that uses Integrated Pest Management (IPM), getting tough on pests is a job for everyone—not just the pest control experts or “exterminators.”

Pests are a nuisance. They damage property, destroy and contaminate food, transmit diseases, and cause allergic reactions.

Conventional pest control by widespread application of pesticides can expose children to pesticide residues. Compared to adults, children are more at risk to illnesses associated with pesticides (such as asthma and cancer) because of their small body size, rapid growth, and habits. Younger children, especially, are at a higher risk of inadvertent exposure to pesticides because they spend considerable time on classroom floors and playgrounds and they are more likely to put unwashed objects and hands into their mouths.

Integrated Pest Management (IPM) effectively controls pests and minimizes the risk that children and other school occupants will be exposed to pesticides.

What Is IPM?

IPM prevents and solves pest problems using a comprehensive approach that combines

- Effective,
- Economical,
- Environmentally sound,
- Socially acceptable methods.

IPM combines facility inspections; student and staff education; proper food handling, storage, sanitation practices, trash and garbage disposal; building repairs and maintenance; landscape modification; and pesticide applications (if necessary) into a comprehensive plan.

The Goal of IPM

The goal of IPM is to provide children and other school users with a healthy place to learn and work by solving pest problems using safe and effective strategies.

How Does IPM Work?

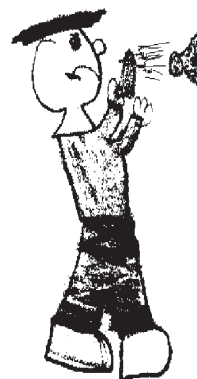
Pests need food, water, hiding places, entry points, and other conditions (such as warm temperatures).

In an IPM approach, school buildings and grounds are inspected very closely to see where pests are finding these life-sustaining resources. Steps are then taken to keep pests out and to make conditions unfavorable to pests by keeping everything clean, dry, and tightly sealed.

IPM programs never use pesticides on a calendar schedule. Pesticides are applied only if and when needed. If a pesticide is needed, the safest, least-toxic materials and application methods are chosen. The top concern is to control pests effectively while ensuring the safety of children and school employees.

IPM provides a decision-making process for determining:

- IF pest suppression is needed,
- WHEN it is needed,
- WHERE it is needed,
- WHAT control tactics are appropriate.



Courtney Webster

Teachers, staff, and students should NEVER take pesticide application into their own hands. Report problems to the school IPM coordinator.

To Get Started with IPM

- 1. Learn about IPM:** School administrators who know more about IPM can successfully implement IPM programs in their schools. Visit <http://schoolipm.ncsu.edu>.
- 2. Adopt an IPM policy:** An IPM policy provides guidance to the school community on how the school district intends to control pests and gives authority to school administrators to implement IPM. It also defines everyone's responsibilities for the success of the program. (See IPM Resources.)
- 3. Use a contract written in IPM language:** If a school district contracts for pest control, the wording of the contract provides a mechanism for selecting pest control companies that practice IPM. Model contracts are available (see IPM Resources). If pest control is done "in-house," the staff members responsible for pest control will need training in the use of IPM techniques.
- 4. Involve the school community:** IPM requires the participation of administrators, teachers and staff (front office, custodial, maintenance, and kitchen), as well as students and their parents. Everyone can help in pest prevention by keeping the school and grounds clean and by reporting pest sightings or conditions conducive to pests.

IPM Resources

Web sites

<http://schoolipm.ncsu.edu>
<http://www.ifas.ufl.edu/~schoolipm/>

Publications

Integrated Pest Management for North Carolina Schools. N.C. Cooperative Extension Service, Publication AG-631-01. 48pp.

For more information, contact

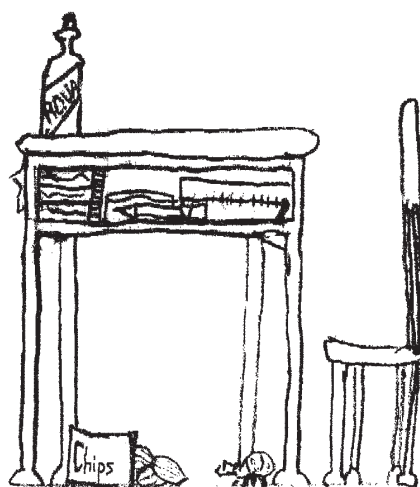
Dr. Godfrey Nalyanya, NCSU School IPM Project.
 Telephone: (919) 515-5650
 Email: godfrey_nalyanya@ncsu.edu
<http://schoolipm.ncsu.edu>

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Benefits of IPM

It's a fact: As long as pests can get into the school, no amount of pesticide will solve the problem.



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1. Safer and healthier school environment.
2. Reductions in pesticide use.
3. Reduced litigation from pest-control activities.
4. Longer-lasting pest control results.
5. Cost-effective pest management.

Any place that food is eaten will attract pests.

LEARN TO RECOGNIZE COMMON PESTS IN NORTH CAROLINA SCHOOLS

ANT



Photo courtesy of Orkin

MOUSE



Big Stock Photo

GERMAN COCKROACH



Adults, juvenile stages, egg case

Photo courtesy of Univ. of Nebraska, Dept. of Entomology

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