

Torri Shelley

Get Tough on Pests in Classrooms

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?

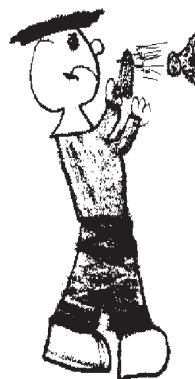
Pests need food, water, hiding places, entry points, and other conditions (such as warm temperatures).

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

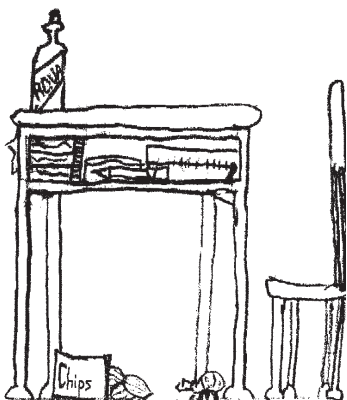
Teachers, staff, and students should NEVER take pesticide application into their own hands. Report problems to the school IPM coordinator.

How Can Students, Teachers, and Staff Help in IPM?

- 1. Learn about IPM.** The IPM program will be more successful when students, teachers, and staff know about IPM and its benefits. (Refer to <http://schoolipm.ncsu.edu>)
- 2. Clean up.** Cleaning up regularly removes the food, water, and shelter that pests need to survive. Pests are attracted to any place that offers food, water, or hiding places such as cabinets, drawers, lockers, cubbies, and the cages of classroom pets. Dispose of trash promptly and recycle properly to keep classrooms clean and pest free.
- 3. Store food in pest-proof containers.** Store food, drinks, and snacks in pest-proof containers with tight lids or in sealable plastic bags. Do not leave animal feed in paper bags. Transfer it to a metal, glass, or plastic container that can be tightly sealed.
- 4. Report and record pest problems.** Report and record in the school pest log any pests sighted or any conditions conducive to pests. Look for leaking faucets, uncollected trash, unsealed cracks and crevices, and broken windows as pests can get in and find shelter. Doors or screens. Pest problems will last as long
- 5. Do not spray for pests.** Spraying is unlikely to solve the problem and will interfere with the IPM program. Call the school IPM coordinator for help with a pest problem.

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.

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

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Funded in part by support from the N.C. Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services Pesticide Environmental Trust Fund. Published by the **North Carolina Cooperative Extension Service**.

Any place that food is eaten will attract pests.

LEARN TO RECOGNIZE COMMON PESTS IN NORTH CAROLINA SCHOOLS

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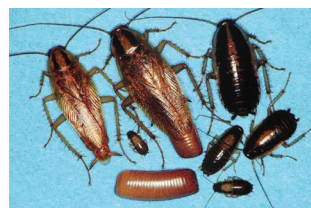
Photo courtesy of Orkin

MOUSE



Big Stock Photo

GERMAN COCKROACH



Adults, juvenile stages, egg case

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

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