

# Integrated Pest Management in the Home

*Using safer  
methods to  
manage pest  
problems in  
your home*



**Community IPM Education Series**

**MSU Pesticide Education Program**

**Extension Bulletin E-2778**

# Steps for Success



## Inspect and Investigate

To get rid of pests you always start with an inspection of the house.

### Look for:

- pests
- signs of pests and damage caused by pests (eg. droppings, cast skins)
- conditions good for pests

You are just like a detective. Ask everyone in the house what they have seen.

### Discover:

- What pests do you have?
- Where are they coming from?
- What are they eating?

Make this a family activity.



## Learn About Your Enemy

Identify what pest or pests you have. Learning the biology of the pest tells you how fast it reproduces, where it likes to live, what it likes to eat, and special things it can do. You will use this information to choose the best ways to manage the pest.



## Know When to Act

Some pests cause serious health problems; most are just a nuisance. Rats, mice and cockroaches can cause diseases and asthma. You need to get rid of these pests. Other pests like earwigs and boxelder bugs do not cause damage or disease. You may be able to tolerate a few of these.

# Successful Integrated Pest



## Monitor for Pests

Monitoring is a key part of IPM. One way is to place sticky traps near the places that you think the pests are living or traveling. This way you learn where most of the pests are, and you can also see if the numbers of pests you capture change when you try different control methods.



## Choose Control Methods

Your goal is to control the pests without harming people. You choose the best methods to do this. Effective pest management emphasizes prevention.

## Eliminate food, water and hiding places

- **Sanitation/Cleaning**

Frequent cleaning will eliminate food and some of the hiding places for pests.

Remember, a crumb to you can be a feast for pests.

- **Fixing things**

Fixing leaks takes away water which all pests need. Many pests like to live in damp places.

- **Eliminating clutter**

Clutter inside and clutter or weeds and plants right next to the building can provide hiding places and places for the pests to store or find food.

## Eliminate the existing population

- **Trapping**

Trapping can be used for monitoring and for control. Using sticky traps, glue boards, snap traps and live traps can tell you exactly what

# What is IPM?

IPM stands for **Integrated Pest Management**. In IPM, we learn about our pests and select the best control methods to manage pests with the least effect to people, pets and the environment.



By anticipating and preventing pest activity and combining several pest control methods, you can achieve long-term results.

## To do this, you need to:

- ✓ Identify the pests.
- ✓ Take away their water.
- ✓ Take away their food.
- ✓ Take away their hiding places.
- ✓ Eliminate the existing population.
- ✓ Deny entry into your home.



A peaceful and calm attitude also helps. Most pests are not life threatening, and a calm attitude helps you resolve the problem in a safer way. Panic about pests can often lead to overuse or misuse of pesticides.

## IPM does NOT mean do nothing!

Using IPM correctly will require a lot of attention on your part to be successful.

# st Management

kind of pests you have. You can also eliminate some or all of the pests this way.

- **Biological Control**

Using natural enemies of the pest is one choice for control. Examples of this are cats (who eat the mice) or tiny wasps that lay their eggs inside the eggs of cockroaches.

- **Pesticides**

These are chemicals that kill pests. In IPM, we may use pesticides when the other control methods are not effective or practical. If we use pesticides, we choose and use them as they are intended. This means reading and heeding all instructions on the pesticide label.

## Deny entry into the home

- **Sealing them out**

Caulking, filling holes and fixing broken doors or windows helps keep the pests from returning.



### Evaluate

Keep checking to see if the pests are still there and which control methods are working. Change your methods if necessary. Remember, it is much easier to get rid of a small number of pests than a huge number.



### Educate Others

Teach others what they can do to keep pests away. Even young children can do their part to take food, water and hiding places away from pests.

## A few words about pesticides:

The results from using chemical pesticides are generally temporary, and repeated treatments are often required. Over time, some pests become pesticide-resistant, and are no longer harmed by the pesticide. If used incorrectly, home-use pesticide products can be poisonous to humans. These are some reasons why it is important to practice IPM.

### Steps in reducing pesticide risks

- Choose the product that will control the specific pest with the lowest toxicity.
- Read and follow the product label. The label is the law. Using a pesticide in a way that is different from the label is illegal and unsafe. (For help on how to read a label see "What does a pesticide label say?" E-2725)
- Determine the right amount to purchase and use.
- Use the product safely and correctly. NEVER use a pesticide meant for outside indoors.
- Wear proper protective equipment. Required personal protective equipment (PPE) can be found on the label. This can include certain types of gloves, boots, long-sleeved clothing, special coveralls, respirators or eye protection.
- Store and dispose of pesticides properly.

New, August 2001. Developed by the MSU Pesticide Education Program: B18 Food Safety and Toxicology Building, Michigan State University, East Lansing, MI 48824 (<http://www.pested.msu.edu>). The publication of this bulletin was made possible by funding from the Environmental Protection Agency, Region 5, Michigan Department of Agriculture and MSU Extension.

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Extension Director, Michigan State University, East Lansing, MI 48824.

New 9:01-10M-UP/KMF, Price \$0.30, Single copy free to Michigan residents.