

# LAWN CARE INDUSTRY

## The key: being paid for the type of service we give, not just the products we apply

### Are there better terms to use than IPM?

■ Is the acronym IPM (integrated pest management) getting a little frayed around the edges? Is it beginning to show some gray?

After all, it's been around for decades. In agricultural circles it has. Only during the 1980s has it been used by professional turf and ornamental maintainers, with any regularity anyway.

"A lot of us don't understand if IPM is doing us harm or doing us good," says Tom Smith, president and owner of Grass Roots, Inc., Lansing, Mich.

Smith, for one, thinks the philosophy of IPM is still valid (see box). In fact, he says it's one of the cornerstones of his landscape design/build/manage company.

Even so, he admits IPM is, by definition, restrictive.

Professionally maintaining landscapes involves *a lot more* than pest control. "Sometimes our programs focus on pest management. We do it at the exclusion of good turf management," he says.

Are there better terms than IPM? Smith trotted out TEMP (Turfgrass Environmental Management Program), a term favored by Dr. Frank Rossi of Michigan State. Other professionals prefer PHC (Plant Health Care), and still others

CLM (for Comprehensive Landscape Management) or CTM (Comprehensive Turfgrass Management).

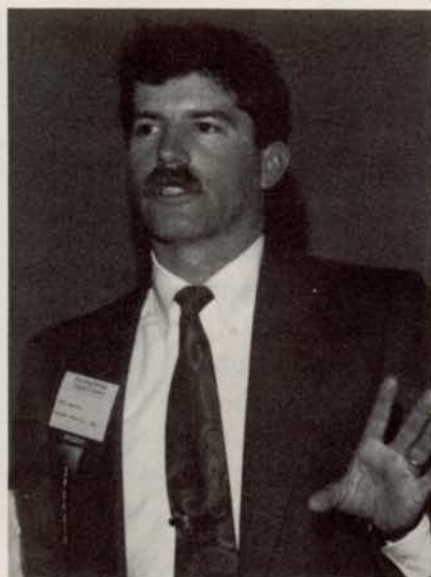
Any, if practiced, can justifiably be used as a marketing tool, says Smith. By using IPM—or any of its cousins—a turfgrass/landscape professional demonstrates that it takes specialized knowledge to nurture and maintain healthy and beautiful turfgrass and landscapes.

Semantics aside, Smith says he believes the industry sometimes sends the wrong message to its customers—that it expects to get paid only when it applies a product in conjunction with its services.

"How many other professionals will come out to your house, provide you with a management plan and not charge you for it?" asks Smith.

(Smith spoke about IPM at the Michigan Turf Conference last January.)

—Ron Hall



Smith says green industry shouldn't push products over good service.

### THE FOUR COMPONENTS OF IPM:

1. Initial inspection of lawn or landscape.
2. Development of a management plan for a particular site.
3. Monitor and treat the site based on the plan.
4. Evaluate and modify the plan.

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