



Integrated Pest Management *A Better Way to Manage Your Landscape*



Forest Lake Country Club in Bloomfield Hills, MI, hired an IPM professional to scout the entire golf course once a week, along with daily monitoring by the superintendent and assistants. The combined knowledge of problem areas and trends allowed for treatment of specifically targeted areas instead of doctoring vast area.

Integrated Pest Management, Integrated Plant Management, Best Management Practices, Total Plant Care....don't get confused by the complicated names. No matter what you call it, taking good care of the landscape you manage and doing so in an environmentally-sensitive way should be a top priority for maintaining your property.

In this article, we use the term *Integrated Pest Management* or IPM. Put simply, IPM is an approach to pest control that employs a variety of methods to keep pest numbers low enough to prevent intolerable damage or annoyance. It involves developing a strategy that will keep the trees, shrubs, turfgrass, or garden vegetables and flowers on your property healthy, while keeping undesirable weeds, insects, and diseases to a manageable level.

Practicing IPM can result in significant pesticide reductions and financial savings, compared to the old *spray at the first sign of trouble, or even before* approach to managing problems. And while least-toxic chemical controls are sometimes needed as a last resort, they're targeted more specifically and more effectively using IPM methods.

The ultimate result of IPM is a more informed approach to maintaining a healthy environment for both people and wildlife. To ensure the greatest success of your IPM program, make sure it includes the following components:

- **Proper Plant Selection & Care** - Also known as *cultural practices*, there's a lot you can do right off the bat to make sure your plants stay healthy. Buying healthy plants, putting them in the right location, knowing their growth habits and needs, and keeping the soil healthy will ensure that your plants get off to the best start. Proper and timely pruning, mowing, fertilizing, and watering are additional cultural practices that cannot be underestimated.
- **Regular Monitoring** - Scouting to determine if and when treatments are needed is a key component of IPM. Pay attention to both good and bad aspects of your landscape and aim to create a healthy balance between pest species and beneficial predators. When you spot a problem, ask: What is the problem? Why is it occurring? Is intervention necessary? What is the best method of control? Over time, you'll get to know what pests occur when and where, and identify *hot spots* that indicate when trouble is brewing.



During the larval stage, numerous insects look similar. Therefore, it is important to be able to identify all stages of a pest's lifecycle and the time of year each stage occurs. This information will help you determine the best management practice for each situation.

- **Correct Pest Identification** - Correctly identifying the problem and potential solutions takes more effort than using a chemical treatment right away, but it's worth it. You'll learn more about your landscape, identify underlying conditions or cultural practices that need attention, and better target the specific problem with an effective solution.
- **A Variety of Treatment Options** - Since there's no one magic solution to solve landscape problems, equip yourself with a variety of effective treatments. Sometimes, planting pest-resistant plant varieties or modifying the plant's habitat work best. Or you might change your cultural practices, try physically controlling the problem, or choose a biological control. If you do choose a pesticide, seek the least toxic option and follow label directions carefully.
- **Record Keeping and Evaluation** - When you scout your property, record the results. Include the date, weather conditions, any problems observed, the method of treatment, and results. This will allow you to track season to season trends and modify treatment solutions as needed.

By following these practices, you'll maintain a healthy landscape and a healthy environment.

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