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IPM
More Effective Pest Control

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Integrated Pest Management (IPM) uses a wide range of pest control methods or tactics, rather than just relying on chemical controls. The goal of IPM is to maintain pest damage at acceptable levels, not to eliminate a pest completely. IPM follows a series of four steps to address pest problems:

1. Set Action Thresholds

Before taking any pest control actions, IPM users first set an action threshold — a pre-determined point at which pest control action will be taken. This threshold is often the level at which pests will become a health hazard, an economic threat, or simply cause an unacceptable level of damage. Finding a single pest does not always mean pest control is needed. An action threshold helps ensure that control measures are taken only when necessary.

2. Monitor and Identify Pests

It is important to determine which pests are present and if they are likely to cause enough of a problem to trigger the action threshold. IPM users should monitor for, and accurately identify pests so that appropriate decisions can be made. Monitoring can including scouting, trapping, or simple observation. The UAF Cooperative Extension Service can offer help in identifying pests.

3. Prevent Pests

To prevent pests from becoming a problem, IPM programs work to create unfavorable environments for pests to colonize, grow, and reproduce. Prevention for outdoor environments might include crop rotation, selecting pest-resistant varieties, or aerating and cultivating soils. Indoor pest prevention might include good sanitation, removing debris, or sealing cracks and other entries into buildings.

4. Control

If action thresholds have been triggered and preventive methods are no longer effective, IPM programs then evaluate control methods to determine which would be most effective. IPM users must know which control methods are available, and should evaluate the benefits and risks of each. Non-chemical methods of controlling pests are often very effective. Some examples of non-chemical control methods include trapping, heat treatments, cutting or mowing, or cultivating soil. Chemical controls can be an effective part of IPM, but are just one of the many tools that may be used.