

# Integrated Pest Management

## IPM Defined

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) clearly defines Integrated Pest Management (IPM) as an "effective and environmentally sensitive approach to pest management that relies on a combination of common-sense practices." The EPA states, "IPM takes advantage of all appropriate pest management options including, but not limited to, the judicious use of pesticides." As defined by the EPA, here's how an IPM program works.

- **Set Action Thresholds:** Decide at what point pest populations or conditions require action.
- **Monitor and Identify Pests:** Identify pests and their risk accurately in order to take appropriate action when thresholds are reached.
- **Prevention:** Control pests before they become a problem through proper maintenance and sanitation.
- **Control:** When an action threshold is identified and preventative measures are no longer an option, effective pest control options are evaluated. These include biological, mechanical, and chemical options. The EPA states, "Effective, less risky pest controls are chosen first . . . If further monitoring, identifications and action thresholds indicate that less risky controls are not working, then additional pest control methods would be employed."

The pest control and turf management industry aligns its practices and protocol with the above definition by:

- Using pesticide products judiciously – not exclusively – in order to keep outdoor spaces healthy and safe by keeping pests at bay.
- Proactively implementing good maintenance practices to keep pest populations at bay.
- Carefully using all important tools in the pest control toolbox to eliminate pests in a safe and effective manner.

## Integrated Pest Management effectively and economically protects community investment in playgrounds, athletic fields, and school grounds.

- Well-designed IPM programs use maintenance and sanitation as the first line of defense against insects, rodents, and noxious weeds. Pesticide products are used when needed to quickly and effectively eliminate pest problems.
- Pesticides play a valuable role in IPM programs by providing reliable pest control and preventing pest problems from reaching dangerous levels.

## Today's pesticide products are important tools in the toolbox of groundskeepers and parks departments who work to keep outdoor spaces healthy and safe.

- Pesticides help protect people and property from infestations of insects and weeds and the disease they can cause that damage our environment and impact our health.
  - For example:
    - Failure to control poison ivy and ragweed can harm children and adults by causing skin irritation and seasonal allergies, while neglected outdoor spaces can hide wasps, ticks, and other hazards.
    - One ragweed plant alone produces one billion pollen spores in an average growing season, contributing to seasonal allergies that cause respiratory problems.
    - Increasingly studies show allergens from rodents like mice and cockroaches are a significant cause of asthma in children, making control of these pests in schools and homes even more important.
- Left uncontrolled, weeds affect our water and air quality because they create more runoff into the groundwater and more dust in the air than healthy yards.