WHAT IS IPM?

Integrated pest management (IPM) is a multi-step approach to controlling “pests” and weeds. The goal is to replace or reduce the use of pesticides, including insecticides and herbicides, with natural methods whenever possible.

Steps:

1) First, OBSERVE the problem for 1-2 months and IDENTIFY what is causing the problem.

IF the problem is a plant that you think may be a problematic weed, THEN use local resources to identify the plant:

https://backyardhabitats.org/benefits/site-report-resource-library/
https://emswcd.org/on-your-land/weeds/weeds-to-know/
https://weedwise.conservationdistrict.org/weeds
https://www.swcd.net/invasive-species/weed-id-and-control-2/

IF the problem is an insect, THEN use local resources to identify the insect and confirm whether it’s beneficial or harmful:

http://ipm.ucanr.edu/QT/beneficialpredatorscard.html
http://ipm.ucanr.edu/PMG/menu.invertebrate.html
https://extension.oregonstate.edu/mg/have-gardening-question-ask-master-gardener OR https://extension.wsu.edu/king/gardening/mg/

We have many local beneficial insects.
Just because they’re not known to you doesn’t mean they’re “bad.”

Convergent lady beetle adults (left) and most reddish lady beetle species prefer aphids. Their larvae (right) prefer aphids but sometimes eat whiteflies and other soft-bodied insects.
2) **Next, EVALUATE whether you need to take action or not.**

   IF the problem has been identified as a *harmful weed*, THEN it’s best to *take action*.  
   IF the problem has been identified as a *harmful insect*, THEN it’s best to *take action*.  
   IF the plant or insect has been identified as *beneficial* or “neutral,” THEN it’s best to *create a healthy and balanced ecosystem* that promotes healthy plants without removing the beneficial insects.

3) **When action is needed, SELECT the most natural solution first, such as:**

   - Hand pulling weeds.  
   - Densely planting native plants so that taller plants provide shade to smaller ones. Native plants know how to work together to create healthy biomes in the soil.  
   - Applying healthy fallen leaves or mulch around plants. This helps prevent them from drying out and becoming stressed, which makes them vulnerable to pests.  
   - Using the jet setting on a water spray nozzle to knock aphids and other pests off of plants.  
   - Cleaning up any diseased leaves to reduce its ability to spread.

4) **Finally, continue these methods for 1-2 years and MONITOR the problem. It can take time for ecosystems to return to balance.**

   If the problem persists, then consider choosing the least hazardous product available.
   - Consult with local resources to determine hazard and toxicity levels.
     - Grow Smart, Grow Safe: [www.growsmartgrowsafe.org](http://www.growsmartgrowsafe.org)
   - Make sure to apply any products according to the instructions provided. If not applied properly, or if applied over a large area, many pesticides /herbicides /insecticides can be very harmful to people, pets, and wildlife.

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**Benefits of using IPM:**

- Healthier outdoor spaces for people and pets  
- Healthier rivers and streams  
- Healthier habitats for fish and wildlife