

# IPM (Integrated Pest Management)

## A Decision Making Process

Four IPM rules before spraying: Decision whether to treat, Decision when to treat, Decision how to treat, Evaluation and review of the decisions.

Over 95% of the animal species are insects. Fewer than 10% of insects are considered harmful to plants; 90% are either benign or beneficial. Even the “bad” ones serve as pollinators, decomposers, or food for other creatures. Benign insects play no role in our gardens. Beneficial insects are pollinators or prey upon pest insects.

How the beneficial insects work is pretty amazing. When plants are being attacked by a pest, the plants release chemical signals into the air to lure in the particular species of beneficial insect most likely to prey upon the pest. This action is sort of like sending an SOS. Also beneficial insects will hold off laying their eggs until enough pests are available for the beneficial young to feed on as they hatch.

This predator – prey cycle is an intricate system that as gardeners we must be careful not to interfere with prematurely. It’s important to give the beneficials a chance to do their jobs.

Before spraying an insecticide, one must identify the problem making sure it is a pest and is harmful to your plants. Remember pesticides will harm beneficials as well as pests; this includes all bees and butterflies.

\*Using companion plants is a great way to control insect balance in the garden. Some of these useful plants are Yarrow, Coriander, Spearmint, Cosmos, Dill, Statice, Rosemary, Queen Anne ’s lace, Fennel, Garlic, Golden Marguerite, Penstemon, Sunflower, Speedwell, Zinnia, Butterfly Weed, Ajuga, Aster, Feverfew, Scabiosa, Lobelia, Alyssum, Lemon Baum, Monarda, Parsley and Rudbeckia.

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