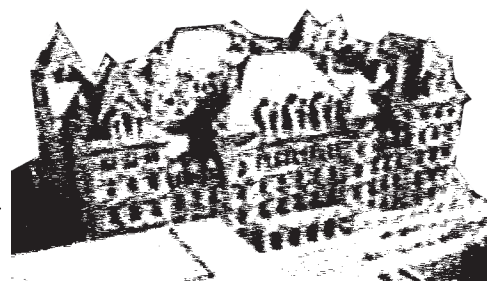


Turfgrass Advocacy

2003



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BACKGROUND

The Community Integrated Pest Management (IPM) Program at Cornell University addresses pest problems where people live, learn, work, and play, using methods that pose minimal risk to human health and the environment. Community IPM is funded by NYS, through the Department of Environmental Conservation. The only one of its kind in the country, the Program employs Extension educators, researchers, and communicators, and collaborates with hundreds of other scientists, educators, and members of the private sector. In the past five years, the Community IPM Program has helped many of the state's 19 million residents find low-risk ways to manage lawn grubs, turf diseases, weeds, mosquitoes, cockroaches, and other pests. These alternatives also give managers of turf and schools ways to comply with new pesticide policies and laws.

The Community IPM Program has helped protect the safety of groundwater, wildlife, and residents affected by the state's two million acres of turf. They have

- taught municipal golf course managers and school grounds managers IPM principles;
- researched composts for topdressing athletic fields to determine their benefits;
- compared standard golf course management, IPM, and nonchemical management to determine if managers can maintain high turf quality without chemical pesticides;
- trained garden center employees in IPM practices to better help their many customers who turn to them for lawn and garden advice;
- linked Extension field staff and university faculty through the "Turfgrass Hotline," a weekly series that provided innovative solutions to turfgrass management problems;
- written or collaborated on 27 publications relating to pest management, such as *Grubs in your lawn?* and *Weeds and your lawn*;
- created public service announcements for New York radio stations that taught homeowners how to manage lawn pests.

In New York schools, the Community IPM Program

- led a series of workshops over three years where 435 people learned how to adopt an IPM approach;
- partnered with the DEC on the *IPM Workbook for NYS Schools*, an important resource;
- coordinated a 30-hour licensing class in pest management alternatives for school grounds superintendents;
- compared conventional and alternative pest management for school grounds and athletic fields;
- partnered with the State Education Department and the NYS Department of Health from 2000–2001 on a survey. Responses from 600 schools indicated they are trying to manage pests with no or few pesticides, but need help.

NYSTA PERSPECTIVE

NYSTA members believe in diversifying the pest management methods available to turf managers, school grounds managers, and homeowners. The way the Community IPM Program combines sound research with implementation is unique and greatly enhances the environmental sustainability of our industry. Unsolved problems abound. For example, turfgrass managers in several municipalities where pesticides are being phased-out must learn new ways to manage their golf courses, parks, and office complexes. With continued funding, the program could create new educational materials for our stakeholders, expand outreach to schools, lawn care professionals, parks, and golf courses, and investigate more low-toxic solutions to pest problems.

RECOMMENDATION

NYSTA recommends that the NYS legislature allocate \$350,000 for continued funding of the Community IPM Program. This level of funding will preserve current Community IPM staff and reinstate the valuable small-grants program that has benefited turfgrass managers throughout the state.