

COMMUNITY IPM PROGRAM

The Community IPM Program provides proactive education and research to address environmental concerns. The green industry, as well as the citizens of NY, benefit. The legislature should support positive endeavors such as Community IPM.

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. The Community IPM Program is the only one of its kind in the country, and is funded by NYS through the Department of Environmental Conservation. In the past five years, the Community IPM Program has helped the green industry and 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:

- helped protect the safety of groundwater, wildlife, and residents;
- 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;
- helped link Extension field staff and university faculty through the "Turfgrass Hotline," a weekly series that provides innovative solutions to turfgrass management problems;
- wrote or collaborated on 29 publications relating to pest management, such as the popular brochures *Grubs in your lawn?* and *Weeds and your lawn*;
- created public service announcements for New York radio stations that teach homeowners how to manage lawn pests.
- partnered with the DEC to create the *IPM Workbook for NYS Schools*, an important resource;
- led workshops where over 500 school personnel learned how to adopt an IPM approach;
- compared conventional and alternative pest management for school grounds and athletic fields.

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 and training 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. In addition, the Program helps citizens understand a balanced IPM approach—whether they are managing pests on their own properties, hiring an industry professional, or setting policies in their local schools and municipalities. 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. Other proactive approaches to environmental concerns should also be supported.