

Sample School Garden Integrated Pest Management Plan

(use this to develop your own IPM plan for beautiful, productive, educational school gardens)

Integrated Pest Management Statement: It is the policy of *school name* to use safe and healthy gardening practices to protect ourselves and our environment from pests, contaminants, pathogens, and toxins. Our mission is *to provide an excellent learning opportunity and to produce healthy, nutritious food for our community*. With garden signs and instruction, all gardeners and visitors are informed that chemical pest-control substances, including natural and organic products, home-made pest-control substances, and conventional pesticides are NOT ALLOWED per State of Maine regulations (see www.thinkfirstspraylast.org). We will use combinations of biological, ecological, horticultural, mechanical or physical Integrated Pest Management methods to protect our gardens from pests.

Our IPM Plan:

Soil Preparation:

- Add organic matter, nutrients, and lime as recommended by soil tests done once every 3 years.
- If cover crop was planted last fall, rototill it in, to incorporate the cover crop into the soil.
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Planting:

- Select pest and disease-resistant seed varieties
- Select species and varieties adapted to our climate, soils, and season
- Follow instructions on seed packets (or other reliable sources of information) to give plants optimal space and orientation for good air movement, water uptake and sunlight exposure.
- 'Rotate' crops – avoid planting crops from one plant family (such as potatoes, peppers, tomatoes and eggplant –all in the potato family) in the same location as last year.
- Plant flowering plants in/around gardens to attract beneficial insects.
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Pest Monitoring:

- Regularly (daily or twice weekly) inspect our gardens for signs of pest damage, plant disease, weeds and insects.
- Use available resources (books, internet, Cooperative Extension, etc) to identify insects, damage, diseases and weeds and to use recommended non-chemical methods for managing these problems and preventing recurrence.
- Keep a garden journal to record when, where and how many pests and beneficial insects are sighted, diseases or damage that occurs, and what non-chemical pest management

methods we used. Include sketch or map to show locations of crops/varieties/pest problems.

Non-chemical Pest Management: (when it is determined that pest control action is needed)

- Pull out diseased plants, prune damaged stems, hand-pick insect pests, and pull out or hoe weeds.
- Use fences, netting, low barriers around individual plants or floating row cover to protect plants from common and/or expected insects, birds, or 4-legged animal pests.
- After harvest, remove all plant debris (plants, stems, leaves) and pull out weeds at the end of the season.
- If time and weather allows we will plant a cover crop such as winter rye, to prevent erosion, encourage soil health and add organic matter.
