NORTH COLUMBIA ENVIRONMENTAL SOCIETY

Safe Pest Management

Rather than focusing on pest control, safe pest management emphasizes the importance of managing pests, with the first step being preventing problems from occurring. This is **Integrated Pest Management** (IPM):

- Identify the pest that is causing the problem so that information about its life cycle and its interaction with the environment can be used to find the right method of control.

- Apply treatments to reduce pest populations to acceptable levels using strategies that may include a combination of biological, physical, cultural, mechanical, behavioral and chemical controls. Start with the least-toxic methods that minimize the risks to human health, are beneficial, and do not target other plants or animals.

- Evaluate the effect of the treatments and adjust them to obtain more favorable results.

DID YOU KNOW?

Staff that sell pesticides are required to have a pesticide dispenser's certificate. They must inform the customer of appropriate application and disposal techniques. These people are a great resource for pest control in your home.

Revelstoke has had no reported cases of Hantavirus or West Nile Disease.

Revelstoke Eco-Fact Sheet

Household Pests

Bothered by Bugs?

Eek!! There are bugs… in my house, on my pet, on my plants! What to do? A quick stroll down the aisle in the pet store, pharmacy, or hardware store will present you with many different choices, all guaranteed to work!

But hold on… before you pick up that pesticide spray, shampoo, or powder; take a minute to assess the situation. How you choose to control the pests in your home will impact your wallet, the health of your family, your pets, and the environment.

Common household pests include not only insects like flies, lice, moths, fleas, earwigs, and ants, but also spiders, mice, other animals, and even microbes and fungi. Realistically, for many pests, total elimination is almost impossible. But, it is possible and desirable to control pests to protect both our health and our property. The methods available to us range from pest prevention to non-chemical pest controls to chemical pesticides. The most effective strategy for controlling pests is a combination of these methods in an approach known as Integrated Pest Management.

Most of us don't spend enough effort preventing pest problems. We respond only after we have an infestation. Often this leads us immediately to a chemical pesticide solution. Not only can using chemical pesticides be expensive, it can also be harmful to our health and the environment.

Pesticides approved for household use contain a variety of toxic substances including cancer causing agents, hormone disrupting chemicals, and ingredients toxic to children, pets, and non-target insects, birds, and other wildlife.

Using chemical pesticides should be our last choice, not our first.

Some Common Household Pesticides:

- Ant and mouse baits.
- Insect sprays for flies, houseplant bugs, and other insects.
- Insect repellents for personal use.
- Flea and tick sprays, powders, shampoos, and pet collars.
- Kitchen, laundry, and bath disinfectants and sanitizers, including bleach.
- Products to kill mold and mildew.

All contain toxic ingredients, but the toxicity of these products varies. Particularly toxic are older products that have been around for a number of years.

Safe Pest Management in Your Home

1. Your first line of defense is to prevent pests from gaining a foothold in your home. Determine the pest's entry method, food, and preferred habitat and then reduce, eliminate, or change them.

- Restrict pest entry by keeping up building maintenance. Screen windows, caulk cracks and crevices, and install weather-stripping on doors and windows.

- Clean up crumbs immediately, use tight fitting lids on trash cans, vacuum regularly, keep food containers tightly sealed, and monitor pet food to be sure you are not also providing food and water to pests.

- Eliminate clutter where pests can find shelter and reduce moisture by keeping plumbing in good repair, insulating cold water pipes, eliminating standing water, and installing a dehumidifier in problem areas if necessary.

2. If making your home inhospitable is not enough, next try non-chemical pest control. Physically remove pests from your home. Techniques include vacuuming, trapping (snap traps, live traps, pheromone traps, wasp traps, etc) making use of lice and flea combs, washing pests off plants, and good old swatting, squishing, and stomping!

3. If prevention and non-chemical pest control methods don't help, try chemical pest control. Try the "least toxic" or "preferred" pesticides first, because they represent the lowest risk to humans and have the lowest environmental impact.

If more toxic chemicals are used, research your choices carefully and talk to knowledgeable staff where pesticides are sold.

Always follow directions exactly. Wear a mask and rubber gloves to handle, mix, and apply the product. Store all pesticides in their original containers and out of reach of children and pets.

4. Dispose of all unused and unwanted remaining products responsibly. The Columbia Shuswap Regional District (CSRD) sponsors a recycling program for toxic materials several times a year.

Always wear gloves (and wash hands thoroughly after handing pests or materials contaminated by them) to prevent the spread of disease.

"Least Toxic" or Preferred Pesticides

Boric Acid: manufactured from borax; it is a stomach poison to insects; low toxicity to humans and animals; remains toxic to insects until removed or washed away.

Diatomaceous Earth (silicon dioxide): disrupts the oily layer on the outside of insects and causes them to dehydrate; it is non-toxic.

Silica Gel: made from sand; causes insects to dehydrate; it is non-toxic.

Pyrethrins: compounds extracted from pyrethrum daisies; nerve toxins that act upon contact and cause quick paralysis in insects; fast-acting and short-lived; moderately toxic to mammals; allergic reactions possible; toxic to fish; non-persistent and may be used up to the day of harvest on edible crops.

Insecticidal Soap: broad spectrum pesticide that acts upon contact against insects and mites; low toxicity for mammals; possible eye and mucous membrane irritation; non-toxic to fish; non-persistent in the environment.

For More Information

- http://www.northcolumbia.org/ for more links and also check out the NCES binders on the reference shelf at the Revelstoke Public Library

- http://www.env.gov.bc.ca/epd/epdpa/ipmp/ the IPM webpage of the BC Ministry of Land Water and Air Protection has excellent information and resources including the *Integrated Pest Management Manual for Home and Garden Pests in BC* (also available at the Library) and the very useful *Safe and Sensible Pest Control* brochure series

- http://www.ccspa.org/publications/responsibleusebrochure.pdf CCSPA brochure *A Responsible Approach to Pest Control in & around Your Home*

- http://www.epa.gov/OPPTpubs/Cit_Guide/citguide.pdf The Environmental Protection Agencies *Citizen's Guide to Pest Control and Pesticide Safety* offers information about preventing pests, using non-chemical pest control methods, & using chemical pesticides.

- http://www.ipm.ucdavis.edu/PMG/selectnewpest.home.html guidelines for pest monitoring techniques, pesticides, and nonpesticide alternatives for managing pests around the home.

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