

# Enhancing the Effectiveness of a Professional Pest Management Program<sup>1</sup>

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The purpose of this guide is to provide information that will optimize pest control in the home environment when working with a professional pest control operator.

When contracting a professional pest control or lawn maintenance service, you should keep in mind that pesticides are not magic bullets, nor are they the only way to control pests. You may be asked by the pest control professional to take certain measures to implement a complete Integrated Pest Management (IPM) plan. IPM requires homeowner cooperation for maximum pest control effectiveness. Although IPM does not exclude pesticides, it does include methods such as sanitation, exclusion, other pest management products, and proper cultural control practices.

When indoor pests are a problem, sanitation will go a long way in improving the chances of maximum effectiveness of control. Consider the following:

- The kitchen should be kept clean.
- Wipe down with warm, soapy water areas that are in contact with food, such as countertops and stovetops.
- Keep food in sealed containers.
- Take out the trash on a regular basis and keep the garbage can covered.

- Do not leave standing water. Moisture provides an ideal environment for molds and fungi, which some insect pests use as food sources. Pesticides alone will not provide adequate control unless the moisture problem is resolved. Repair leaky pipes and faucets and empty out standing water.
- Clean out cabinets in the kitchen and discard infested food. Cereals, rice and other grains may harbor beetles and moths. Your pest control professional may ask you to vacuum cabinets and leave them empty so that there is a clear treatment area. Do not replace any items until the treatment has thoroughly dried.
- Remove insect-infested clothing from closets and have it dry-cleaned. Dry cleaning will kill insects after an infestation is discovered. Leave closets empty so that the pest control professional has a clear area to treat, and don't replace any items until the treatment has thoroughly dried.

Exclusion is an easy-to-use method and simply refers to keeping pests outside of the home. Repair window screens and doors, and seal exposed cracks to prevent easy entrances for many types of pests.

There are other pest management products that are available from retail centers for homeowners. Various attractants, baits, pheromones, repellents, glue boards and traps may be practical in some situations. When using

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Use pesticides safely. Read and follow directions on the manufacturer's label.

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any pesticide product, be sure to read and follow the label directions.

Lawn care services contracted for pest control will usually leave a reminder notice of cultural practices to implement for maximum effectiveness. For example, an insecticide treatment may need to be watered into the soil for optimal control of soil-inhabiting insects, such as white grubs. A healthy lawn is the best defense against any pest outbreak. Proper watering, mowing, and fertility practices are a large part of the IPM program in combating lawn pests.

Ask the person selling the pest control program to outline the programs steps and how you can assist to achieve the best control for your money. Good cooperation between the customer and the company will result in optimal results.

For more on professional pest control and lawn care services, see EDIS Fact Sheet PI-38 *Selecting a Professional Pest Control Service* (<http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/PI075>).

For more information on pests in and around the home environment, visit UF/IFAS Extension's Electronic Data Information Source at <http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu>.