

## What you should do NOW! California Integrated Pest Management

Integrated Pest Management (IPM) is an effective and environmentally sensitive approach to pest management that relies on a combination of common sense practices. The website ([www.ipm.ucdavis.edu](http://www.ipm.ucdavis.edu)) has been upgraded and is helpful to all gardeners.

IPM programs use comprehensive information on the life cycles of pests and their interactions with the environment in order to provide economical control with the least possible hazard to people, property, and the environment. The new, improved website offers science-based solutions for home gardeners as well as agricultural professions.

In October, 2011, the UC IPM team did a major upgrade to the site. The site now has thousands of photos covering more than 1,000 different pests. You will find specific information on more than 300 varieties of ornamental plants, flowers, fruit trees and vegetables. More than 150 “pest notes” provide in-depth research on insects, plant diseases, nematodes, vertebrate pests and weeds. The site will help you identify the good bugs and the bad bugs, and it also will allow you to search for the type of plant, flower or fruit you are trying to grow and learn about common insects, viruses or other pests that might be posing a problem.

You will learn about biological control (the use of natural enemies such as beneficial predators, parasites and pathogens), cultural control (practices that limit or prohibit the survival of the pest such as reduced watering), mechanical and physical control (killing or removing the pest such as mulching weeds, or trapping gophers and moles), and chemical control (when and what pesticides to use that will also protect yourself, your pets and the planet).

The focus is on providing environmentally sound solutions, and the emphasis is on providing information about pest preventions, nonchemical controls, use of natural enemies, and when pesticides are necessary, the use of safe, less toxic products such as soaps and oils. Winter is considered the best time to do one of the most important jobs of a good gardener- research, and the IPM website is an excellent place to explore.

Jepsen, Rebecca, *Master Gardener*, Bay Area News Group, 2011