

Integrated Pest Management (IPM) in the School Environment

Department of Pesticide Regulation

In September 2001, the Healthy Schools Act (AB 2260, Shelley) was signed into law. This right-to-know law requires schools to notify parents and post signs when pesticides are used on school property and enhances pesticide use reporting requirements for licensed pest control businesses. It also requires the Department of Pesticide Regulation (DPR) to provide information and resources to school districts about integrated pest management (IPM). DPR informs school districts about IPM through a new web site (www.schoolipm.info), an upcoming guidebook, and future training activities. In addition, DPR supported two school IPM projects through its competitive Pest Management Alliance Program. The projects emphasized training school district staff in IPM and publicizing IPM practices among districts through participatory events. A new Alliance project will help implement school IPM programs in other parts of California.

DPR is one of several departments, boards, and commissions that participates in the California Environmental Education Interagency Network (CEEIN), and contributes to the Disney Company's Environmental Program, which encourages fifth-grade classrooms throughout California to design creative environmental projects. Recently, DPR has joined the Cal/EPA Environmental Education Team, an offshoot of CEEIN that will help fulfill the mandates of SB 373 (integrated environmental education). DPR also funds environmental education through its Pest Management Grant Program. Since 1995, DPR has funded several projects that promote IPM gardens in schools, communities, and sewage treatment plants. DPR is currently working with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency to educate teachers about illegal (unregistered) pesticides and legal pesticides that are misused or improperly disposed. In continuing-education workshops, teachers are taught the principles of IPM, and in turn involve their students in IPM projects.

Currently, DPR works with the California Integrated Waste Management Board to include IPM as a vital component of two school-based projects: the Waste Diversion Project and School Instructional Gardens Project.