

INTEGRATED PEST MANAGEMENT (IPM) IN HEALTH CARE FACILITIES



WINTER 2010 NEWSLETTER

Welcome to the winter edition of the *IPM in Health Care Facilities* newsletter, published by the Integrated Pest Management (IPM) in Health Care Facilities Project—a partnership of the Maryland Pesticide Network and Beyond Pesticides in collaboration with the Maryland chapter of Hospitals for a Healthy Environment. The Project enables and facilitates transition to safe pest management practices at Maryland health care facilities. This newsletter is part of the Project's outreach effort to share information with Maryland health care facilities interested in effective pest management that protects patients, residents, staff and visitors from unnecessary exposure to pesticides.

Facilities participating in the Project's Partnership Program agree that IPM prioritizes pest prevention and non-chemical interventions as key components to *greening* their facilities. Under an IPM approach, only least-toxic pesticides are used as a last resort for pest management. This approach is especially important for patient and long-term care populations, which are especially vulnerable to chemical-intensive pest control methods that can cause or exacerbate the very diseases and conditions for which they are being treated.

Feel free to contact us to learn more about how you can improve patient, staff and visitor safety by reducing pest complaints and toxic chemicals in your facility—with no increase in cost.

This edition of the newsletter focuses on **interior landscaping**, an often overlooked component of Integrated Pest Management practices for health care facilities. It also includes a message from our new Project Director, Sharon Fried.

Save the Date: May 11 -13 2010



**The 9th International Conference to Catalyze Environmental
Improvements in the Health Care Sector**

**Held this year at the Baltimore Convention Center in Baltimore, MD
for more information go to www.cleanmed.org**

Interior Landscaping, Commercial Floriculture & Ornamental Gardenscape

Interior landscaping provides an inviting and healing environment for patients or residents, staff and visitors. Healthy plants can also contribute to healthy indoor air quality. It is important, however, that methods of plant management do not contaminate the indoor air.

How your facility can prevent pesticide use in its interior plantings:

- Plants should be chosen to function in a hostile environment, only hardy species should be used throughout the facility.
- Ensure that your facility's contract with the plant care provider specifies that only nontoxic products such as insecticidal soaps and horticultural oils will be used to treat plant diseases and that chemicals will not be used to treat or prevent disease. Instead, problem plants that do not respond to non-chemical interventions should be removed and replaced by healthy ones.
- The best way of preventing plant diseases and infestation is to maintain healthy soils by using natural, non-synthetic, composted soils throughout the gardenscape.
- Always follow the guidelines: identify---naturally treat---remove---replace.



What to look for to indicate plants might have a problem:

- Regular IPM monitoring in health care facilities should include visually inspecting the interior landscaping and following organic practices of soil management.
- Common, nuisance pests such as white flies or aphids may be present on unhealthy plants and will cause damage such as stunted growth or withered leaves.
- During the larval stage, some insects burrow in the soil and will come to the surface during watering. Large populations can cause damage to the plant roots.
- Check the underside of leaves and stems for small, sticky patches caused by scale. Scale will deplete the plant of nutrients and will, themselves, attract pests such as ants.



scale



aphids

Where to report problems: Since most ornamental interior landscaping is seen in the main lobbies of healthcare facilities, anyone in any facility should report concerns about interior landscaping to the hospitality staff who direct their information desks. This speaks to the importance of having all staff trained in the benefits and practices of IPM, regardless of their position. Once trained, the information desk staff will know the right person to contact to investigate the concern.

For more information, contact: Sharon Fried, Project Director at 410.605.0095 or sfried@beyondpesticides.org

The situation is better than you think: Pesticides are infrequently applied on interior landscaping in health care facilities because replacing a problem plant is so easy. With regular inspection, unhealthy plants can be removed before the problem multiplies to other plants. And, for the smaller problems that may arise, insecticidal soaps should be among the first choices that your contracted plant care provider offers.

Much of the above information has been provided by one of the Project's IPM consultants. For more information visit Chip Osborne's Web site at www.osborneorganics.org



A Message from our new IPM Project Director, Sharon Fried

I am delighted to be working with the IPM Project partners, Maryland Pesticide Network and Beyond Pesticides. I have found my new colleagues to be a collaborative and multitalented group of individuals dedicated to eliminating the use of toxic chemicals by focusing on alternative methods for managing pests in our health care environments.

IPM takes a proactive approach by seeking to understand the root causes of pest problems so we can prevent them by implementing long-term solutions rather than by simply treating symptoms. As a long-time clinical staff member in hospital facilities, I have come to appreciate the importance of IPM and natural land care in protecting public health. Public health officials are empowered by local and national governing agencies to prevent disease by instituting a proactive approach to health care. IPM plays a critical role in public health by ensuring that health care facilities prevent hospital-acquired illnesses and aid in convalescent care by not introducing toxic chemicals to an already compromised population. For example, many studies have linked pesticide use with asthma, cancer and birth defects. Exposing an already vulnerable patient population, their families and their caretakers to such toxic chemicals is counter intuitive in health care settings, where the objective is to first do no harm.

The goal of our program is to educate hospital managers about the positive health aspects that their facility can achieve through IPM and natural land care and to assist them in their transition to a pesticide-free environment.

From our Web site: Sharon has held a variety of both clinical and non-clinical positions in health care since 1980. Most recently, she was the Safety & Sustainability Specialist at Mercy Hospital in Baltimore, where she was responsible for management of programs such as Integrated Pest Management, Hazardous Waste Handling and Reduction, Recycling and other Green Team initiatives. Sharon earned both a B.A. and M.A. from College of Notre Dame of Maryland. She also has certificates in Leadership & Social Change and Nonprofit Management.

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For a CleanMed overview, conference details, speakers and more, visit www.cleanmed.org

Some of the stated goals of the conference are to:

- Maximize opportunities for the health care sector's development, adoption, and dissemination of environmentally preferable products and practices, and its design, construction and operations of green buildings.
- Convene health care stakeholders – senior administrators, clinicians, purchasing professionals, university researchers, designers of professional buildings, and vendors of cleaner and safer products and services – to share and exhibit environmentally regenerative practices.
- Promote environmentally sustainable design practices and construction materials in health care.



May 11-13, 2010 • Baltimore, Maryland

Also of interest if you are in the area or if you can make a quick get-away:



Case Western Reserve University - Cleveland, Ohio ([maps](#)) | [Registration information](#) | [Speaker list](#)

For more information go to www.beyondpesticides.org

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