

## Management Tools for a Healthy Learning Environment

### What is the purpose of pest monitors?

#### Why are you placing pest monitors?

Monitoring for pests is the cornerstone of a school Integrated Pest Management (IPM) program. Monitors are a proactive way to detect and deal with pests before they become a problem.

#### Why are you placing pest monitors in my classroom, office, etc.?

Pest monitors are placed in “Pest Vulnerable Areas” (PVAs). Any area where food, water, warmth, shelter, habitat, or access points are located are prime locations for trap placement. Don’t feel singled-out about having monitors placed in your room, office, etc. Monitors are placed all over the school for many different reasons.

#### Do I need to do anything with the pest monitors?

No. Pest monitors are passive and only need to be examined every 4 weeks by your custodian or IPM Coordinator. However, monitors could be used as a “teachable moment.” Explain to your students why the monitors are there and their purpose. You could even make checking traps and reporting pests a daily or weekly activity in your class.

#### Are pest monitors dangerous?

Pest monitors are not dangerous, but they do contain sticky glue. Unless checking monitors is part of a class activity, children should stay away from them to avoid sticky hands, and to ensure that traps stay in their intended location. If children should get the glue on them, or if it gets on other items, vegetable or olive oil can help remove it.



**Above:**  
Figure 1. Examples of arthropod pest monitors.

**Right:**  
Figure 2. Used pest monitors indicating the presence of cockroaches. Young roaches in a trap indicate that the trap is located near a “nesting” site where inspections and control efforts can be concentrated.



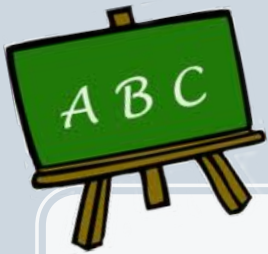
### Did You Know?

Monitoring can provide vital pest information, including:

- pest type (species)
- life stages present
- pest abundance
- location of pests and harborages
- location of travel direction/routes
- pest pressure and frequency
- population status (growing/declining)
- if action is necessary



**Figure 3:** Integrated Pest Management (IPM) pyramid. The primary component of IPM is education, followed by sanitation and exclusion. Pesticides should be used only when absolutely necessary.



## A Teachable Moment

Pest monitors are the key to early detection of and rapid response to emerging pest issues. Certain insects, spiders, and rodents become problems in our schools, homes, and businesses, because they are allowed entry and are unknowingly supplied with food, water, and shelter. Human habits are often the cause of pest presence. How might the common human habits listed below attract or benefit pests as they pertain to food, water, and shelter?

- lack of knowledge: “I never knew my actions could attract pests...”
- lack of knowledge: “What’s wrong with the way we currently manage pests?”
- accumulating clutter
- improper storage of food, snacks, pet food, edible items, or clutter
- eating at your desk without immediately cleaning up crumbs, etc.
- children eating in classrooms
- having potted plants in the classroom, etc.
- class pets and pet food
- untidiness in common lounges, etc.
- relying on custodians to clean up after you
- using used and/or new couches and other upholstered furniture
- storing and using unauthorized pesticides in classrooms
- lack of pest reporting

## Integrated Pest Management: A Proactive Approach

Integrated Pest Management (IPM) is the process of proactively managing pests emphasizing techniques such as education, pest monitoring, improved sanitation, pest exclusion, minimizing available food, water and shelter, and using the least-toxic, most appropriately formulated and applied pesticides only when absolutely necessary.

Pest monitoring allows your pest managers to “look” for pests 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Detecting pests early, before they reach outbreak levels (when most people notice/think about pests) is critical for control. Controlling a few pests is much easier than controlling a large population.

Learn tolerance. We fear many insects and spiders because we do not understand them, or because we believe all can bite or poison us. Fortunately, this is not the case. Most pests found on a pest monitor are of no threat to your health. These are considered “non-actionable” pests and we should have tolerance for their occasional presence.

Conversely, when a pest of medical significance is caught on a trap, like a cockroach, immediate action should be taken. These are “actionable” pests and should be dealt with immediately using non-chemical techniques when possible, resorting to chemical use when supplemental or immediate control is needed.

## WHAT’S THIS PEST?

**Uncertain what pests are on your monitoring traps? No problem. Take a picture (in focus) of the unfolded trap and send it to the Utah Plant Pest Diagnostic Lab. They can provide timely identification of pests and help with control solutions. Attach images in an email to:**

**ryan.davis@usu.edu**  
**435-797-2435**

