

I.P.M. at Zelenka Nursery

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Zelenka Nursery, Inc., a large wholesale operation located in Michigan and North Carolina, has developed unique strategies for implementing I.P.M. With a peak work force of 700 employees, comprised of local and migrant workers, there are many challenges to maintaining an awareness of I.P.M. and utilizing some of its methods. Toward this end, Zelenka promotes a broad base of direct employee involvement in I.P.M. issues, and has created ways to educate and encourage all employees in the practice of pest management.

Zelenka's I.P.M. program is characterized by how it is organized, and by the means used to encourage effective and accurate scouting, pest identification, and decision-making. Central to the organization is an I.P.M. core group, which manages interdepartmental I.P.M. issues. Led by the nursery's I.P.M. coordinator, members of the group represent each production department, staff horticulturist, and the shipping docks. The core group meets twice a month.

Because of Zelenka's large work force and production area of over 5000 acres, many employees have contact with plant material before it leaves the nursery. Workers are able to communicate pest findings on I.P.M. scouting reports. Efficient communication is also the driving force behind the nursery's annual I.P.M. workshop, pest alerts, and pest advisories sent via e-mail. The I.P.M. program includes a gypsy moth scouting incentive plan, a monthly I.P.M. calendar, and an I.P.M. notebook of resource material provided to each department. The I.P.M. notebook assists in pest identification along with in-house expertise, newsletters from Michigan State University, and outside consultants.

Pest management supervisors within the production departments use all available information to determine whether control measures are warranted. In considering whether action is necessary, supervisors consider (1) pest density and potential for damage, (2) proximity of harvest date, and (3) presence of natural enemies or other agents that could keep pests in check. Pesticide use through scouting and spot treatments occurs only when and where necessary.