

## Sample School Garden Integrated Pest Management Plan

**Integrated Pest Management Statement:** It is the policy of this school to use safe and healthy gardening practices and prevent people from being exposed to unhealthy contaminants, pathogens, and toxins. Our mission is to provide an excellent learning opportunity and to produce healthy, nutritious food for our community. With garden signs and instruction, all gardeners and visitors are informed that chemical pest-control substances, including natural and organic products, home-made pest-control substances, and conventional pesticides are NOT ALLOWED per State of Maine regulations (see [www.thinkfirstspraylast.org](http://www.thinkfirstspraylast.org)). We will use combinations of biological, ecological, horticultural, mechanical or physical Integrated Pest Management methods to protect our gardens from pests.

### Our IPM Plan:

#### Soil Preparation:

- We will keep our soil healthy by adding organic matter, nutrients, and lime as recommended by soil tests done once every 3 years.
- If cover crop was planted last fall, we will rototill it in, to incorporate the cover crop into the soil.

#### Planting:

- We will select pest and disease-resistant seed varieties.
- We will select species and varieties adapted to our climate, soils, and season.
- We will follow instructions on seed packets (or other reliable sources of information) to give plants optimal space and orientation for good air movement, water uptake and sunlight exposure.
- We will 'rotate' crops to avoid planting crops from one plant family (such as potatoes, peppers, tomatoes and eggplant –all in the potato family) in the same location as last year.

#### Pest Monitoring:

- We will regularly (daily or twice weekly) inspect our gardens for signs of pest damage, plant disease, weeds and insects.
- We will use available resources (books, internet, Cooperative Extension, etc.) to identify insects, damage, diseases and weeds and will use recommended non-chemical methods for managing these problems and preventing recurrence.
- We will keep a garden journal to record when, where and how many pests and beneficial insects are sighted, diseases or damage that occurs, what non-chemical pest management methods we used, and the results.

#### Non-chemical Pest Management: (when it is determined that pest control action is needed)

- We will pull out diseased plants, prune damaged stems, hand-pick insect pests, and pull out or hoe weeds.
- We will use fences, netting, and low barriers around individual plants or floating row cover to protect plants from common and/or expected insects, birds, or 4-legged animal pests.
- After harvest we will remove all plant debris (plants, stems, leaves, excess fruit, etc.) and pull out weeds at the end of the season.
- If time and weather allows we will plant a cover crop such as winter rye, to prevent erosion, encourage soil health and add organic matter to the soil for next year's crop.