



Spring Newsletter

2005

What is IPM?

Integrated Pest Management.

IPM in lawn care is an environmental approach to managing insect, weed and disease pests. IPM focuses on plant health and takes into account all methods of pest management including cultural, biological, physical and chemical control.

IPM has been a component of provincial licensing in the lawn care industry since the early 1980's and is implemented by **Bobby Lawn Care** and most other lawn maintenance companies.

Poorly managed turf and landscapes are susceptible to pest infestation. The goal of an IPM program for lawns is to establish a healthy, dense stand of turf that is better able to withstand a pest invasion. Therefore, when a pest is present, the turf is able to better withstand the incursion and then recover quickly.

Bobby Lawn Care has included information on these practices through our "Lawn Care Trends" flyer and through spring newsletters such as this.

Maintaining proper nutrient levels in your lawn's soil is very important, not only in the overall health of the turf, but it also helps prevent pest problems from occurring. Low nutrient levels cause turf to thin, creating open areas where weeds can easily take over.

Low nutrient levels can also lead to diseases such as red thread and dollar spot, whereas diseases such as brown patch and necrotic ring spot, on the other hand, are often brought on by excessive fertilization. Over fertilization can also cause an increase in thatch levels, which creates a favourable environment for many other harmful diseases and/or insect problems.

The first step in an IPM program is to identify any pests that may be encountered during the season. Once a problem occurs, accurate identification is the key to determining a treatment strategy. Knowledge of the various pests and their life cycles will aid in their proper identification. Proper identification will also prevent any unnecessary treatments.

Turf areas should be inspected on a regular basis. **Bobby Lawn Care** technicians are trained to keep an eye on lawn conditions at the time of service and monitoring must also be done by the homeowner between our visits. If changes occur to your lawn between visits, please call our office. **Bobby Lawn Care** offers ongoing free pest diagnosis and IPM advice.

The presence of a pest does not always indicate that a treatment is

required. A healthy lawn can withstand some level of pest invasion. Setting thresholds for each pest is an important part of the IPM strategy. Thresholds are the concentration where the presence of pests begins to cause undesirable damage to the lawn. Weed, insect and disease thresholds will vary for each lawn, dependent on the health and use of the turf, and should be decided on between the property owner and the turf manager. Some homeowners may tolerate a few weeds while others prefer their turf to be weed free. A properly irrigated lawn will be able to withstand a higher grub infestation than a drought stressed lawn. A treatment may still be warranted however if the lawn is being damaged by animals digging for the grubs.

Once the threshold is met for a particular pest, a control measure is required. Treatments should be applied when the pest is most susceptible in order to achieve maximum results. This is where knowledge of the life cycle of the pest becomes essential. Treatments can include physical, biological, cultural and chemical control.

Treatment will vary with each pest and may include a combination of treatments. An example of this would be a chinch bug infestation. A

chemical control would be necessary to reduce the insect population. The treatment can be limited to specific areas. An infestation in the backyard may not require that the front also be treated, or perhaps treatment along a fence line may be needed when the infestation is originating in a neighbouring yard. In order to prevent a further infestation, dethatching (a cultural control) may also be required. Thatch is an ideal home for chinch bugs. Once the chinch bug infestation is controlled and thatch levels are reduced, renovating the damaged turf may also be necessary. Overseeding with a variety of seed resistant to chinch bugs will help to prevent further problems. These varieties contain an endophyte (fungi) which resists chinch bugs. This would be considered a biological control.

Once a treatment has been applied, it is important to continue monitoring the lawn. This is vital in determining the effectiveness of any treatments and the success of the IPM program.

When you have questions or when lawn changes are of a concern please don't hesitate to call us at **Bobby Lawn Care**.

Visit our website at:
www.bobbylawn.com