**Segment for Week of 19 July, 2021 757-550-1854**

**What is IPM?**

This is Steve Rulison bringing you information on Shore friendly living and gardening from the Eastern Shore Master Gardeners and Virginia Cooperative Extension. From my perch near the mouth of Occohannock Creek, I recorded \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ of rain last week.

This week we are going to talk about Integrated Pest Management also known as IPM.

**IPM** stands for “**integrated pest management**.” It is a way to manage insects, diseases, weeds, animals and other “pests” that cause damage by combining biological, cultural, mechanical and chemical practices. It uses a series of steps to understand pests and decide the best methods of control. IPM is a holistic, ecological approach to controlling pests. In an IPM program, the pest situation is assessed before taking action. The first step is to identify the pest to determine biological information, such as the pest’s habitat and life cycle. Once this information is gathered and evaluated, it can be used to develop a pest management plan. IPM uses an assortment of control methods and employs the best practices available to protect people, animals, and the environment.

IPM is a strategy commonly used by pest management professionals, but is often misunderstood by the general public and others. Extension Master Gardener volunteers, for example, have an overall basic understanding of IPM and are able to make gardening recommendations based on those principles.

An IPM program may include chemical controls when necessary. In an IPM program, chemical controls are generally a last resort — when other control methods have failed or cannot regulate the problem alone. If you decide to use a pesticide, always choose the least toxic option. When selecting a product, consider the type of pesticide needed (insecticide, herbicide, fungicide, etc.) and the target site (i.e., the intended application site). Always read the label before you purchase, use, store, or dispose of a pesticide product.

For more information or answers to other gardening questions, call your local Accomack or Northampton County Extension Office. Here on the Shore call either 678-7946 or 787-1361.

<https://resources.ext.vt.edu/contentdetail?contentid=1000&contentname=Myth-busting%20Integrated%20Pest%20Management%20for%20Extension%20Master%20Gardeners,%20ENTO-388NP>