

Sandoval Extension Master Gardener Policy on Advising on Pesticides, Herbicides and Other '-cides'

Since most Extension Master Gardeners do not have a pesticide license for use or spraying, from a legal standpoint, the Extension Master Gardener should not be recommending '-cides' when you are giving information and representing SEMG.

Even if an Extension Master Gardener has a current pesticide license for use or spraying, it is recommended to follow the strategies outlined in **Integrated Pest Management *(IPM)** in advising clients while representing the NMSU Extension Master Gardener program:

1. **Identification** – Make sure the correct insect or pathogen is identified.
2. **Cultural** – Provide best practices for keeping plants healthy to withstand disease/insects through proper placement in planting, maintaining surrounding areas, rotating crops, effectively irrigating, fertilizing, etc.
3. **Monitor** – Regularly scout for pests, signs of damage, or disease caused by pests. Catch the problem early.
4. **Mechanical Control** – Hand remove, vacuum or wash off the pest. Use row covers and traps to exclude pests at different stages.
5. **Biological Control** – Advise on natural enemies of the pest. Maintain surrounding areas to promote natural enemies of the pest.

Ask the question, is a chemical '-cide' necessary? For example, is it one insect, a few or several? The same question can be asked about weeds.

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Is a fungal or pathogenetic infection localized or systemic? What is the aesthetic or economic value of the tree, shrub or fruit/vegetable crop? Can the client handle a certain threshold of loss or unsightliness?

6. **Chemical Control** (Referral) –

If an NMSU publication or other State Extension publication exists, the Master Gardener can share that publication with the client including if there is a chemical pesticide recommendation that fits the identification of the pest.

Advise clients to read and follow a product's label instructions for the health and safety information and the efficacy in application. Remind them following the instructions is not a choice, it is the law.

The NMSU Extension Master Gardener program position is for limited or no pesticide, herbicide or fungicide use because it is less expensive, and has protective benefits to the environment. There may be times to recommend a chemical '-cide', but it should be the last resort in the IPM strategy. That recommendation should come from a licensed pesticide holder/advisor within the NMSU Extension Service, such as the County Agent or Specialist.

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*For more information on Integrated Pest Management, refer to NMSU Publications:

H-176: Integrated Pest Management (IPM) Strategies for Common Insect Pests of Trees in New Mexico

<https://pubs.nmsu.edu/h/H176/>

H-169: Using Insectary Plants to Attract and Sustain Beneficial Insects for Biological Pest Control

<https://pubs.nmsu.edu/h/H169/>

H-172: Backyard Beneficial Insects of New Mexico

<https://pubs.nmsu.edu/h/H172/>

H-174: Integrated Pest Management (IPM) Strategies for Common Insect Pests of Trees in New Mexico

<https://pubs.nmsu.edu/h/H174/>