Introduction

IPM education is critical to reducing misuse of pesticides, which can result in increased personal exposure to pesticides and nonpoint source pollution of waterways. Survey results from other states indicate people gain familiarity with the term IPM as a result of exposure to a variety of sources. We completed a survey of the general public and an identical but separate survey of Master Gardeners in four Nevada counties. Our data enabled us to identify key messages to improve IPM literacy among the general population in western Nevada.

Goal

We sought to compare IPM-related attitudes and behaviors among Master Gardeners and the general public to more efficiently reach different educational populations with targeted IPM messages.

Method

The survey was mailed to 3,000 residents in four counties in western Nevada. The identical survey was administered online to 226 Master Gardeners in the same counties. Response rates were 22.2 percent and 43.8 percent, respectively. The geographic and economic representation among Master Gardeners and general public respondents were similar. The survey instrument and protocol were approved by the University Institutional Review Board (IRB #E12-013).

Overall results

- General public respondents were more likely to consider rapid results when purchasing pesticide products than were Master Gardeners.
- Master Gardeners placed more importance on pesticide safety than did general public respondents.

Knowledge of IPM

| Pests are controlled without using pesticides. | 39.2% | General public | 42.5% | Master Gardener |
| Pests are controlled only if they are causing significant damage. | 40.0% | General public | 78.2% | Master Gardener |
| Pests are controlled as soon as you discover them. | 22.5% | General public | 16.1% | Master Gardener |
| You should monitor for pests on a regular basis. | 64.2% | General public | 88.5% | Master Gardener |

Over half of general public respondents were uncertain or had misconceptions about the following IPM-related statements. We developed educational messages to address these issues, and various vehicles for broadly disseminating IPM information.

Conclusions and future plans

- The general population in western Nevada are unfamiliar with the term IPM and have misconceptions about many IPM principles. Master Gardeners are valuable allies in educating clients and communities about IPM, but their reach may be limited.
- A range of educational products have been developed to alleviate IPM illiteracy, but we do not know whether these efforts will affect IPM-related behaviors.
- We are currently developing IPM implementation guides to further support IPM literacy and behavior changes related to IPM practices.

Acknowledgments

We are grateful to Elizabeth Christiansen at the Center for Program Evaluation at the University of Nevada, Reno for her assistance in analyzing the survey and assessing the results. We also acknowledge the work of Melody Hefner, Urban IPM and Pesticide Safety Education Program Assistant.

Want more information?

Heidi Kratsch
University of Nevada Cooperative Extension
4955 Energy Way, Reno, NV 89502
775-784-4848
kratschh@unce.unr.edu

We are currently developing IPM implementation guides to further support IPM literacy and behavior changes related to IPM practices.