

Preventive vs. Curative Control

Which management strategy is more in line with IPM principles — preventive or curative? This depends on your history with each pest, the nature of the pest, and the control strategies that are available to you.

Preventive control:

Preventive measures (treatment BEFORE the pest appears) include a wide variety of techniques, including the use of pest-resistant varieties of turf, to cultural practices that improve plant health and therefore pest resistance, to application of pesticides in advance of symptoms of pest infestation.

For some pests — particularly those that are the most destructive, the most difficult to scout for and/or the most difficult to control, preventive control is not only the most effective strategy, but is frequently the most environmentally and economically appealing strategy.


Examples of pests that are typically controlled preventively for these reasons include summer patch, white grubs and *Poa annua*. However, a pest that requires preventive control at one location, due to a long history of difficult control, may not require preventive control at another location, where its numbers have been light enough to warrant very little concern.

To time preventive pesticide applications, consult the Resource, “[Threat Temperature Tables](#)”.

Curative control:

Curative measures, which are taken AFTER the pest or its symptoms are detected, are usually employed when the pest is easily controlled and/or it has caused minimal damage in the past at your location.

Examples of pests that are typically controlled curatively include black cutworms and moss. For these pests, scouting for early signs of pest activity is very important. The Resource “[Threat Temperature Tables](#)” provides information on the threat temperatures that should trigger scouting for key pests.

To determine whether curative measures are best for your situation, consult one of the disease management publications that are listed when you click on the  (“Resources”) icon.



White grubs, such as this masked chafer, are usually managed preventively



Moss is usually treated curatively