



UNIVERSITY OF  
FLORIDA

Cooperative Extension Service  
Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences

## Pepper Production Guide for Florida: Pest Management Introduction<sup>1</sup>

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Peppers are subject to damage from many insects, nematodes, and fungal, viral and bacterial pathogens. In addition, weeds and several physiological disorders, such as nutrient deficiencies and sun scald, can cause yield losses.

Specific chemical control measures can be obtained from the control guides mentioned in the Suggested Reading list at the end of this publication. Chemical control of pests must be practiced only according to the label. Where several chemicals are available to control a pest, alternating the use of the materials may help reduce the chances of development of pest resistance to a chemical. Misuse of chemicals can lead to possible worker contamination and environmental pollution in addition to exceeded tolerances for pesticide residues on fruit. Before using any chemical, read the product label and the information in the guides detailing the precautions and suggestions for proper use.

Pest control should consist of an integrated pest management (IPM) system which relies on efficient use of all appropriate control strategies. Action is taken to prevent problems and suppress damage levels without reliance solely on chemicals. Effective IPM consists of four basic principles: *exclusion* of the pest or the field, *suppression* of pest levels below an economical threshold, *eradication* of certain pests where deemed absolutely necessary, and *plant resistance* in cultivars of crop plants.

To carry out these principles, several steps are taken: identification of key pests and beneficial organisms, preventative cultural practices to minimize pest development, pest population monitoring by trained field scouts, prediction of loss and risk to determine when acceptable levels of yield and quality will be threatened, and action decision on what control measures are warranted. All sound IPM programs include an evaluation phase to assess the level of success.

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