

Pest and Disease Management

Pest and disease problems usually indicate an underlying problem, be it shallow topsoil, too much water or fertilizer, a plant in the wrong location, or inappropriate mowing practices.

Identifying the root cause of the pest or disease is the first step for solving the problem in an organic land care program.

If the pest remains above tolerance levels, any use of organic pesticides should be a last resort after correctly identifying the problem, correcting any underlying problem(s), and monitoring. This approach is very similar to [Integrated Pest Management \(IPM\)](#); the difference is, in an organic program, an approved organic pesticide can be used as a last resort instead of a synthetic pesticide.

Examples of pesticides allowed under an organic program include, but are not limited to, insecticidal soaps, horticultural spray oils, botanical insecticides such as neem oil, boric acid, food-grade extracts such as from hot pepper, elemental sulfur, *Bacillus thuringiensis* or BT based products, and biological fungicides such as *Bacillus subtilis*.

The [Organic Materials Review Institute \(OMRI\)](#), is a nonprofit, 3rd party review organization that determines which input products are allowed for use in organic production and processing. Products that are OMRI certified may be used in organic operations that are certified organic under the USDA National Organic Program. To determine whether a pesticide would be approved for use in an organic land care program, look for the OMRI label, or search the product list on their website.