



# Action Kit

# Critter Ridders and Pest Patrols

### Summary:

Students perform a compare/contrast skit after being provided with a simple framework in which to share information about pest control options and consequences.

### Materials:

- Pest Patrol: A Backyard Activity Book for Kids*, pages 4, 14, 17 and 23
- Task Cards (6 sets per act)
- "Caution: Pesticides" sign (self-made)

### Optional Materials:

- hand tools for digging dandelions
- bucket
- plastic bat and ball
- pesticide sprayers garb (coveralls, protective nose/mouth face mask, gloves, boots)
- overhead projector and transparency/pen (*Teachers may wish to preside at overhead projector, asking questions and taking note of actions as students perform them.*)

S wat, squash, spray, stomp. How do you get rid of pests? Let's take a look. IPM uses knowledge about pest biology and habitats to choose common-sense practices for keeping pests under control. In schools, homes, yards, fields, greenhouses, malls and other public places, IPM controls pests with the least effect on people, pets, and environment. Dig into *Pest Patrol: A Backyard Activity Book for Kids* for some background. Then let kids take the spotlight to show what they know!

## Guiding the Activity

### 1. Getting Ready:

- Explain that volunteer actors will create a skit for a volunteer audience. You'll read *Pest Patrol: A Backyard Activity Book for Kids*, pages 4, 14, 17, and 23 together before the skit.
- Give copies of the Act I Task Card to the 6 actors for Act I and copies of the Act II Task Card to the 9 actors for Act II. Task Cards outline quick concepts for students to demonstrate/pantomime/act in the skit. Allow the cast 5 minutes (more time if props are involved) for prep time away from the audience.
- Tell the audience to watch for IPM practices in each act.

### 2. Act I: "Muscle-powered Pest Patrols"

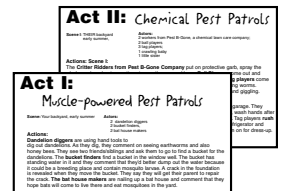
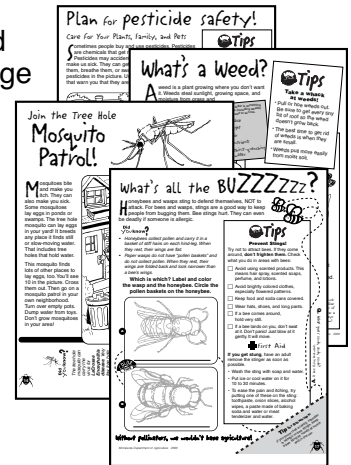
**Actors:** (6): 2 dandelion diggers; 2 bucket finders; 2 bat house makers

**Scene:** Your backyard in early summer

The **dandelion diggers** are using hand tools to dig out dandelions. As they dig, they comment on seeing earthworms and also honey bees. They see two friends/siblings and tell them to go find a bucket for the dandelions. The **bucket finders** find a bucket in the window well. The bucket has standing water in it and they comment that they'd better dump out the water because it could be a breeding place and contain mosquito larvae. A crack in the foundation is revealed when they move the bucket. They say they will get their parent to repair the crack. The **bat house makers** are nailing a bat house to a tree. They comment that they hope bats will come to live there and eat mosquitoes in the yard.

### 3. Intermission Discussion

- Do you think dandelions are pests or guests? Defend your answer.
- What do we mean by muscle-powered pest control?
- Of what value are bats? How do you feel about them? Explain.
- What will you do to reduce or control mosquitoes in your yard?
- What kinds of critters could get into your house through cracks in the foundation? Why is this a concern?
- How do you decide whether to call something a pest or a guest?



## 4. Act II: "Chemical Pest Patrols"

**Actors:** (9): 2 workers from Bugpesters, a chemical lawn care company; 2 ball players; 3 tag players; 1 crawling baby; 1 little sister

**Scene I:** Neighbor's backyard in early summer

**Actions:** The **Critter Ridders** from **Bugpesters Company** put on protective garb, spray the whole yard, then put a caution sign\* on the sprayed grass. **Ball Players** come out and practice. The sign gets tipped over/hidden when the ball hits it. The **3 tag players** come out in the grass to play tag. One comments on a robin in the lawn, digging worms. The three start a game of tag and end up falling down in grass and rolling and giggling.

\* Make a "Caution: Pesticides" sign

**Scene II:** Coming indoors after playing

**Actions:** Two **ball players** put balls/bats away in garage. They wipe feet on doormat and remove shoes at door of the home, go inside, wash hands after playing outside, get apples and wash them carefully before eating them. **Tag players** rush into house, drop jackets or sweaters on the floor, get apples out of refrigerator and start eating them. One kicks shoes off and **little sister** quickly puts them on for dress-up. **Baby** crawls in and crawls on the jacket and puts fingers in mouth.

## Discussion Questions

- Did the workers from Bugpesters warn of chemical dangers? How? Was this enough warning?
- What things came into contact with the sprayed grass? (bat, ball, shoes, clothing of tag players)
- What did the kids do to protect themselves and to avoid bringing pesticides into their home?
- Could the little sister and the crawling baby get pesticide on them or in them? Describe how.

5. Have students go back to their *Pest Patrol: A Backyard Activity Book for Kids* and fill in the answers on page 23.



## Did You Know?

- Brown or wilting weeds are sometimes a clue that pesticides may have been sprayed.
- Cockroaches can't bite. That's why they run away when they see us.
- Wasps are predators, feeding insects and other arthropods to their young. Bees feed on nectar and pollen from flowers.
- Cockroaches can eat and contaminate food, give off a disagreeable odor, transmit diseases to people, and cause allergic reactions and asthma in people—especially children.
- Humans breed plants for yield, while nature breeds plants for survival.
- "Weed" like you to know. . . No plant is a weed in nature, and weeds aren't all bad. For example, they pull up nutrients from deep in the soil and help protect soil from washing away in wind and rain.
- Dandelion roots cause damage to sidewalks and pavements.
- Milkweed protects monarchs because it is poisonous to most animals. If an animal eats a monarch caterpillar or butterfly, it gets sick from the milkweed eaten by the insects.

## Digging Deeper



Lights, camera, action. Now create Act III! What other places in your home or school might pests be found? What pests? How will you show use and possible effects of (1) chemical pest control and (2) muscle-powered pest control? Consider people, pets, and other non-target plants and animals. What do you want your audience to learn?



Why not take the show on the road? Perform the skit for another classroom with the same or different cast. Include discussions at intermission and the end to spread the word about IPM.

## Bulletin Board IDEAS

Invite students to make a "Caution: Pesticides" sign for the bulletin board, or use the one you made as a prop for Act II. Children draw or find pictures of dandelion diggers, window screens, hoes, etc. They label them as "muscle-powered pest controls" and add to the display.



## Minnesota Graduation Standards, Grade 3

**History and Nature of Science:**  
A. *Scientific World View.*

**Reading and Literature:**  
B. *Vocabulary Expansion.*

**Speaking, Listening and Viewing:** A. *Speaking and Listening*