

# University of the South

## Integrated Pest Management Plan

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### Introduction

The University of the South (Sewanee) Office of Environmental Stewardship and Sustainability and the Office of Facilities Management work closely together to promote the sustainability efforts of the university through thoughtful landscape and maintenance practices. The purpose of this IPM plan is to communicate and institutionalize the Landscape Standards of Practice that dramatically limit the usage of chemical inputs and irrigation on University grounds in order to prioritize safe habitat for wildlife and pollinators, maintain a wilderness aesthetic, and manage a culturally and ecologically thoughtful landscape.

### Background

The Sewanee campus, nestled among 13,000 acres of rolling woodlands atop the Cumberland Plateau blends a wilderness aesthetic with the more formally organized landscapes found in the built environments of campus and town. This blending is deeply seated in the history and traditions of landscape management at the University. The landscapes of the campus built environments have never been highly manicured.

Traditionally, funds for grounds management have been low and tight - especially for the acreage. This has led to a long history of limited chemical and fertilizer use on the property and an eschewment of manicured “perfection.”

Both the rustic blending of a wilderness aesthetic and the legacy of not introducing costly chemicals and fertilizers have been wholeheartedly embraced by the contemporary grounds maintenance administration. This appreciation and ethic are grounded in the tenets of sustainability, an appreciation of native plant assemblages and ecology, as well as the realities of labor demands.

The cultural and ecological foundation of the grounds approach and landscape standards of practice at Sewanee significantly reduce the need for more resource-intensive biological, mechanical, or chemical inputs.

## **Guiding Tenets**

- Sewanee is located in a wilderness. When the landscape standard gets overly “fussy” it looks out of place.
- Fertilizers, pesticides, herbicides and irrigation will not be used unless the grounds team can’t think of a better way to approach or handle the situation.
- Where possible, an essential intention is to create habitat diversity and increase landscape function.
- As little intervention as possible is best for the dual constraints of labor and budget.

## **Our Plan and Policy**

### **Action thresholds:**

Sewanee Grounds will not regularly apply insecticides, fungicides, or herbicides to campus shrubs, trees, and other greenery except in rare cases of high risk to valuable species, in which pest species have caused significant damage, or the pest species pose a significant threat in spreading to the larger community. Sewanee commits to not utilize neonicotinoids except in cases of significant damage to campus ash trees by the Emerald Ash Borer.

Yearly applications vary as the needs of the campus fluctuate. For a current record of products used at the University of the South please contact [sustain@sewanee.edu](mailto:sustain@sewanee.edu).

### **Monitoring:**

Sewanee Grounds employees are responsible for regularly monitoring and reporting instances of pest presence of concern. Sewanee Grounds performs monthly walk-throughs to assess campus conditions.

### **Preventing pests:**

Sewanee will first utilize practices of:

- Cultural controls by reducing maintained lawn, creating and maintaining rough edges and transition zones, embracing mixed species lawns, and preferring native species to their exotic counterparts
- Regular monitoring by Grounds employees
- Mechanical controls - such as the use of pine straw and leaf mulching around plant beds and trees to deter weeds, diminish lawn seeding needs, and encourage habitat spaces
- Biological controls - for example, planting with knowledge of pest-host interactions to select naturally resistant species with extreme preference for natives, or co-planting species with known predator insects to deter pests

### **Control:**

When the above-mentioned strategies have been exhausted and pests remain above acceptable levels University Grounds crew may then utilize alternative tactics.