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REDUCING PESTICIDE USE IN HOME GARDENS THROUGH TRAINING AND PARTICIPATORY RESEARCH IN BIOLOGICAL CONTROL

*Farah MG. Heraux¹, C.S. Sadof¹, R.J. O'Neil¹, and R. N. Wiedenmann²

¹Department of Entomology, Purdue University, 901 West State street, West Lafayette, IN 47907, USA

² Illinois Natural History Survey, University of Illinois, 607 E Peabody Dr, Champaign, IL 61820, USA

Over 550 Master Gardeners in Indiana, Illinois, Ohio and Kentucky were taught about alternatives to pesticides in workshops that focused on the theory and practice biological control of pest in home gardens. In addition, gardeners learned how to conduct experiments in their backyards and were encouraged to participate in the summer research program that tested specific mechanical, cultural and biological controls. Workshop participants were surveyed before the workshop, and in the two succeeding growing seasons after the training to measure change in their pest management practices. The McNemar's Analysis conducted on the pre- versus post- workshop responses indicated that the percentage of gardeners that used cultural and mechanical control remained the same (above 80%) and more than 30% of the gardeners reducing their use chemical pesticides with 20% eliminating their pesticide use entirely. Despite these gains, workshop participants and individuals who conducted research failed to increase the rate at which they adopted biological control. Individuals who conducted research on alternatives to pesticides did not reduce their rate of pesticide use any more than those who simply attended the workshop.