

# SANITATION

✓ **Sanitation should be addressed throughout the growing season.**

Sanitation is a key component of greenhouse IPM. Removing potential sources of pathogens and insects is the cheapest and most efficient way to grow healthy crops.

✓ **Weeds should be removed in and around your greenhouse. All benches should be sanitized before new plants are brought into your greenhouse.**

Weeds under benches are a source of insects and pathogens. For example, weeds growing under a bench in a local greenhouse harbored both western flower thrips and tospovirus. The yellow sticky cards in the greenhouse had no thrips nor did the crop display signs of the insect or virus. Careful inspection and a virus test of the weeds detected the problem. A thorough weeding eliminated the source of the pest and disease, potentially preventing major problems in the crop cycle.



*Before sanitation (above) and  
after sanitation (below).*



*Weeds under bench.*

✓ **All plant material should be removed and used pots and potting mix or soil should be discarded or sterilized before reusing.**

All surfaces should be sprayed with a disinfectant (e.g., Greenshield® or Zero-tol®).

✓ **Incoming plants should be inspected for disease or insects.**

At least 10% of each shipment should be randomly inspected. Look under leaves for eggs and/or adult insects. Segregate infested or diseased materials and treat, discard, or send them back to the distributor.

### **START CLEAN TO STAY CLEAN!**

**Sanitation is essential to making IPM work. The benefits are numerous - fewer pest and disease problems, decreased pesticide use and healthier plants.**

✓ **“Pet” plants should not be held over and plants grown outside during the summer should not be brought inside.**

“Pet” plants are stock plants or a favorite one-of-a-kind plant that you may have held over for years. These are often reservoirs for pests. To minimize this source of problems, don’t bring them into a clean greenhouse. If you must bring them in, treat them with pesticides first and segregate them from your commercial growing area.

✓ **Alert your employees of the importance of sanitation.**

Employees should not wear yellow or light colored clothing, which attracts whitefly and thrips. This increases the risk of carrying insects from house to house. Hands should be washed whenever diseased plants are handled, and infected plants should be bagged before being carried out of a house and thrown into the trash. Do not compost them.