

Background

Facilities Maintenance (FM) Department's Horticulture and Pest Control Division maintains an extensive suite of physical assets (eg. building, garden, and external areas) that may harbor pests such as insects and weeds. Without monitoring and control, these assets may become affected by pests creating nuisance, costly maintenance, or worse still, health risks to the KAUST community. Health, Safety & Environment (HSE) Department's Chemical Management Procedure provides guidance for environmentally friendly use of these chemicals, and HSE and FM work together in the best interests of KAUST community.

Horticulture & Pest Control employs Integrated Pest Management (IPM) at KAUST. IPM is an ecosystem-friendly strategy to minimize the use of pesticides whilst protecting non-target organisms and the environment. It uses a combination of techniques such as biological control, habitat manipulation, and modification of cultural practices. to minimize health, environmental and financial risks.



Reducing pesticide use

Reducing pesticide use is a continuous process, and FM has made major reductions to date via the following key methods:

- Sanitation, habitat modification and exclusion;
- Establishing action thresholds;
- Awareness campaigns; and
- IPM techniques including biological, cultural, mechanical, physical, & regulatory controls.

As part of continuous improvement and Sustainable Development Goal 15, FM and HSE continue to look into initiatives such as new natural-ingredient based herbicides and protecting and promoting terrestrial habitats and biodiversity.



A better environment for all

HSE and FM's Horticulture & Pest Control Division have put in place measures to reduce impacts on a key desert hedgehog habitat at KAUST. The site is confirmed as an active breeding site, and given hedgehogs are relatively short-lived, the approach will allow the natural population to thrive. Key measures taken include :

1. Avoiding use of plant and insect chemicals in the area, ensuring the micro-habitat continues to function as nature intended;
2. Limiting use of mechanized noise-generating equipment during pruning;
3. Minimizing any disturbance to the vegetation corridors and special landforms that host these creatures; and
4. Training and education of staff that enter these areas to be aware of the protection measures and make observations that will assist in future management.

