

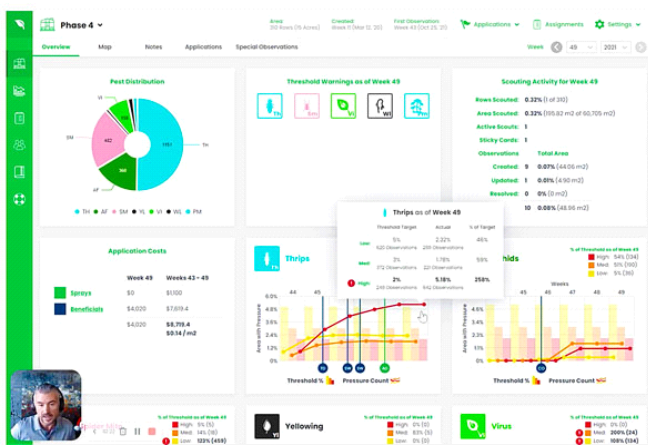
GROWERTALKS

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IPM Scouting Tool

Jennifer Polanz



Recently we caught up with Carrie Izsak, co-founder and president of IPM Scoutek, a relatively newer company (established in 2019) that has created a very useful IPM scouting software to help greenhouse growers record and respond to pest and disease issues. The goal was to digitize IPM scouting and move away from the pen-and-paper process that required the additional step of building spreadsheets and entering data to see trends.

“The genesis of all this was to get to know the process of IPM for the greenhouses and then to get their feedback,” Carrie said.

The software company is based in Leamington, Ontario, Canada, surrounded by some of the most high-tech growers in the province.

“The net result of building it this way and working with our customers is to make a super useful tool that makes a lot of sense to them,” she said.

What’s the tool? It’s a software that runs on a tablet or phone (iOS and Android are available now) where IPM scouts can see a customized layout of the greenhouse (or vertical farm or whatever operation layout you have) and mark pest problems as they move through, as well as record maintenance issues, and show biological and spray treatments. Carrie says Wi-Fi can be spotty in greenhouses, so the tablets can operate on airplane mode recording data until they get to a Wi-Fi signal and will then upload the data for a complete dashboard look.

Growers can set warning thresholds, too, for pests and disease so they get warned immediately when they’re over their pre-set threshold for pressure. On that dashboard, they can see the pest and disease pressure, along with when they applied biological controls or sprays to gauge efficacy.

“You put all those three together and now you have a much better picture on your strategy and if it is working,” Carrie said.

The program is multi-lingual, so the language can be changed depending on the user. In the newest iteration, Scoutek 2.0, there’s a heat map that shows pest and disease pressure visually to give growers a better idea of

where problem spots may continue to persist. Growers can “build” their own growing facility in the software, whether that’s an ornamental or vegetable greenhouse, vertical farm, container, etc.

While the product was developed in Canada, it’s being used by greenhouse growers globally and is available on a monthly contract. To find out more, visit ipmscoutek.com. **IG**