

# SAFE USE AND DISPOSAL OF PESTICIDES

**P**esticides can harm our health and our environment. Testing has shown even small amounts of these pesticides may be lethal to creatures that are an important part of the food web. Pesticides reach our waters through both the sewer and storm drain systems due to normal use and improper disposal. Other fact sheets in this series can help you prevent and effectively manage pest problems in your home and garden using the least toxic methods.

## SELECT THE PROPER PESTICIDE

- Identify the pest and afflicted plant.
- Make sure the pesticide you choose is labeled for use on that plant and that pest.
- Read the entire label — it's the best source of information about how to use the product.
- If more than one product works, then select the least toxic pesticide. (see Signal Words, at bottom right).
- Buy only the amount you can use in one season.
- Time your treatments to catch pests at their most vulnerable stage.
- Spot treat whenever possible, rather than spraying the whole yard.
- Try to buy pesticides in single-use, or ready-to-use form. Avoid concentrates and the large economy size.

## THE LABEL IS THE LAW

- The label on a pesticide container is a legal document that describes exactly how the product is to be used based on extensive testing. Make sure you understand how to mix and apply the pesticide before you begin, then follow all label directions exactly.
- Use the product only as described on the label.

## SAFE USE AND STORAGE

- Read the label before using pesticides and follow the directions. You can cause serious injury to yourself, children, pets and the environment if you misuse pesticides.
- Before using pesticides, remove children, pets, and toys from the area and cover birdbaths, fish ponds and anything else you don't want sprayed or dusted.
- Don't smoke, eat, chew gum or drink when handling pesticides.
- Follow label directions for wearing protective gear when mixing and applying pesticides. Depending on the product, this might include: plastic or rubber gloves, safety glasses or goggles, a respirator rated for pesticides, long-sleeved shirt, long pants or coveralls, and closed shoes (no sandals or bare feet).
- If you buy concentrates and dilute them for use, mix up the smallest quantity that will do the job, and use it up.

- When mixing or measuring pesticides, use a dedicated set of spoons and cups. Mark the utensils with something permanent, such as fingernail polish, and store them with the pesticides so they won't ever be used in the kitchen.
- Store pesticides in their original containers, out of the reach of children and pets, in a cool, dark, dry place outside the house. A locking cupboard in the garage or storage shed is ideal.
- Never remove labels or transfer pesticides to other containers.
- Water used to rinse out a sprayer or applicator should be applied like the pesticide.
- After applying pesticides, take a shower and put on clean clothes.
- Teach children that pesticides are poisons that shouldn't be touched or consumed.

## SIGNAL WORDS

**Caution, Warning, Danger** and **Poison** are "signal words" that indicate the product's level of acute toxicity to humans.

**Caution** means slightly toxic, **Warning** means moderately toxic, **Danger** - means highly toxic and **Danger** along with the word **Poison** indicates the greatest toxicity.

In addition to the acute (immediate) risks, pesticides may also have chronic (long-term) risks to humans, animals, and the environment.

## PROPER DISPOSAL

If you find yourself with unwanted pesticides, give them to someone who can use them, or take them to a household hazardous waste collection facility or event (see Household Hazardous Waste Collection Programs on side panel) and REMEMBER:

- Don't pour leftover pesticides or water from rinsing equipment on the ground or in any type of drain inside or outside the house.
- Don't put pesticides in the trash.
- Never use or give away any pesticide that has been banned such as chlordane, DDT or Dursban.

## READING A PESTICIDE LABEL BRAND X PESTICIDE

### BRAND NAME, CHEMICAL NAME, AND COMMON NAME:

A brand name is the name the manufacturer has given to the product. It is the name used for all advertising and promotion of the product. The chemical name describes the chemical structure of a pesticide and is derived by chemists based on international rules for naming chemicals. Most pesticide manufacturers have an "official" common name assigned to the active ingredient. Often times many brands will use this "generic name" if each contains the same active ingredient. Brand names and common names are not the same and not all labels will list the common name for the pesticide.

### ACTIVE INGREDIENTS:

All of the active ingredients in a pesticide formulation must be listed on the label. The inert (non-pesticide) ingredients may not be listed by chemical name if the label shows what percentage of the total material is inert ingredients. Look here first to find out what is in the product before buying it.

### OMRI:

Denotes that this brand name material has been reviewed and approved by the Organic Materials Review Institute (OMRI) safeguarding the public trust by guaranteeing an open decision making process. OMRI is an independent non-profit organization (who assists the organic community) by providing a highly competent and scientifically defensible technical review process based on considerations of human health and the environment established in the Organic Foods Production Act. To find out more about OMRI visit: [www.omri.org](http://www.omri.org)

### PRODUCT CODE IDENTIFICATION:

The product code used by the manufacturer and the EPA; use this number when contacting the manufacturer or EPA about the product.

### PRECAUTIONARY STATEMENTS:

Known hazards to humans, domestic animals and the environment.

### NOTE TO PHYSICIANS:

Actions a doctor should take if the product is ingested, inhaled, or comes into contact with skin or eyes.

### FIRST AID INSTRUCTIONS:

Immediate action required if the product is ingested, inhaled, or comes into contact with skin or eyes.

### DIRECTIONS FOR USE:

How much product to use; how to mix and apply the product.

### CONTROLS:

Pests the product is formulated to control.

### PLANTS:

Plants that can safely be treated with the product; if the product can be used on food plants, the label also tells you how many days before harvest you can apply the product.

### STORAGE AND DISPOSAL:

How to safely store the product. Unwanted pesticides should be taken to a household hazardous waste facility or collection event.

## PESTICIDES & WATER POLLUTION

Pesticides can damage our health and kill beneficial insects necessary for a healthy garden. Common household pesticides show up in our waterways, sometimes at levels that can harm sensitive aquatic life.

The County of Ventura Environmental and Energy Resources Department is working with local nurseries and hardware stores to reduce the risks associated with pesticide use. This fact sheet is part of a series of informative publications and store displays designed to educate Ventura County residents about less-toxic pest management.



Look for the "Our Water Our World" logo next to products in participating nurseries and hardware stores throughout Ventura County. For a list of participating stores, call 805/289-3333 or visit <http://www.wasteless.org>

Pest control strategies and methods described in these publications are consistent with Integrated Pest Management (IPM) concepts, and are based on scientific studies and tests in actual home and garden settings. IPM is an environmentally sound approach to pest management combining various methods with good horticultural practices. Follow all label directions on any suggested products. NO endorsement of specific brand name product is intended, nor is criticism implied of similar products not mentioned. Different products with the same active ingredients are equally suitable.

## HOUSEHOLD HAZARDOUS WASTE COLLECTION PROGRAMS

Most cities offer FREE monthly collection events that accept pesticides, fertilizers, latex and oil based paint, motor oil and filters, car and household batteries, pool chemicals, stains, solvents, fluorescent light tubes, automotive fluids, cleaning products, photographic chemicals and more. For more information and collection schedules call 805/289-3333 or visit [www.wasteless.org](http://www.wasteless.org).

## FOR MORE INFORMATION

Participating stores have been provided books on Integrated Pest Management (IPM) you may use while in the store. The store staff has been extensively trained in IPM to assist you.

The Certified Master Gardener Program operated by the University of California Cooperative Extension provides a free assistance Helpline and offers a variety of workshops and school education programs. Call 805/645-1455.

### Check these websites:

<http://www.watoxics.org>

<http://www.ipm.ucdavis.edu>

<http://www.pesticide.org/factsheets.html>

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