



ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION SERIES

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How To Use Homeowner Pesticides Properly

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Identify The Pest You Wish To Control

This is the first step in controlling any pest problem. Identification includes understanding the habits of the pest in question. If you cannot do it yourself, seek help from a professional, such as your county Extension agent.

Use Pesticides As A Last Resort

Many pest problems can be resolved without the use of pesticides. Removing or excluding pests from food, water, and hiding places can often eliminate the problem.

Select The Proper Pesticide

This includes the type of insecticide and the way it is formulated (dust, spray, aerosol, etc.). Check with knowledgeable individuals and good information sources to select the appropriate chemical.

Read The Entire Label

Understand the product label before you buy, mix, apply, store, or dispose of a pesticide. Make sure the label includes the pest you want to control, the site where you want to apply it, and the equipment you will need to make the application. Understand the signal words and safety precautions, and know what to do in case of an accidental poisoning or pesticide emergency. If you do not understand the label entirely, consult your county Extension agent.

Buy Only The Amount Of Pesticide You Need

Once opened, many pesticides lose some of their potency after a few months of storage. Buying too much insecticide at once could result in poor control later on and complicate proper disposal procedures.

Prepare The Site For Safe Pesticide Use

Follow instructions on removing people and pets from the application area. Remove all objects that

might be damaged or contaminated by pesticides from the areas to be treated. Make sure food, food utensils, food preparation areas, and eating areas are properly removed or covered. Do not replace them or use the area until the waiting time specified on the label has elapsed.

Prepare Yourself For Safe Pesticide

Make sure you have or can get the kinds of application and personal protective equipment and clothing specified on the label. Wear this equipment when opening, mixing, and applying the pesticide. Open, mix, and dilute the pesticide outdoors or in a well-ventilated area. After applying a pesticide, shower and shampoo thoroughly. Wash any contaminated clothing separately from the family laundry.

Apply Pesticides Safely

Follow all use directions carefully. Use only the amount directed at the time and under the conditions specified. Use pesticides only for the purpose(s) listed. Never apply pesticides outdoors on windy or rainy days. When treating food plants and gardens, observe the time-to-harvest waiting period on the label. Never eat, drink, or smoke while using pesticides. You may not use "Restricted Use Pesticides" unless you are a certified applicator licensed by the Alabama Department of Agriculture. If you spill a pesticide, clean it up immediately according to the label directions; do not merely try to wash it away.

Properly Store Pesticides

Store pesticides and other dangerous household chemicals securely so that children, pets, and others who might not understand the label cannot reach them. Do not store pesticides near wells or sink holes. Do not store pesticides in locations affected by temperature extremes. Never put pesticides into

food or drink containers. Keep pesticides in their original container with a readable label.

Properly Dispose Of Pesticides

Dispose of waste pesticides and pesticide containers according to the label and current local and state laws. To dispose of less than a full container of formulated liquid, leave it in the original container, securely capped. Wrap the container in several layers of newspaper, tie securely, and place in a covered trash can for routine collection. Concentrated liquids in containers up to a gallon should be poured onto an absorbent material, such as oil dry, kitty litter, or saw dust, shoveled into a plastic bag, and placed in the trash.

Individual packages of dry formulated pesticides, such as granules or dusts, can be wrapped in several layers of newspaper, placed in a plastic bag, tied at the top, and placed in the trash.

Empty pesticide containers should be triple rinsed, and the rinse water used as spray material for pest control purposes. Empty, tripled-rinsed containers can be placed in household trash.

Aerosols should be discarded in the household trash only when completely empty. Before discarding, spray the contents outside away from humans and pets. Never put pressurized cans, even empty ones, in a trash compactor or incinerator.

Be Aware Of Regulations And Changes

Pesticides that have been banned by the EPA may be on the Hazardous Waste List and cannot be placed in household trash. Contact your county Extension agent or call the Alabama Department of Environmental Management, 205-271-7726, for specific instructions on banned pesticides or pesticides classified as hazardous waste.



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For more information, call your county Extension office. Look in your telephone directory under your county's name to find the number.

The suggestions in this publication advise safe use and disposal of homeowner pesticides, using the best technology available at the current time. The author assumes no liability for the effectiveness or results of the procedures described.

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