

Buying Only What You Need

Be a smart shopper and protect the environment. Buy and use only what you need to do the job. Also, check the label before purchasing the product to determine your necessary tools and safety gear.



Step 1. Identify the pest to be controlled. Beneficial insects should not be misidentified as pests and should be left alone. You can reduce the chances of harming beneficials by selecting pesticides that target specific species. Contact your local Extension office for assistance with identification.

Step 2. Match a pesticide product with the pest you have identified. Target pests are listed on the pesticide label.

Calculate the amount of pesticide you'll need before you purchase. Then apply the label's recommended amount; don't apply more than recommended. Applying more than the label's recommended amount can cause damage to plants or resistance to pests. Also, it can cause harm from overexposure.



Selecting a Pesticide

When selecting a pesticide, purchase and use only what you need. Purchase products for the right pest, and don't dump pesticides in the trash or down the drain. If you can't use all the pesticides, give them to a neighbor to use on the target plant or site. After using sprayers and containers, rinse them three times and apply the rinse water to the target site. Throw only containers that have been triple-rinsed in the trash. Never burn containers. If you have inherited chemicals involuntarily, you can discard them at one of the annual Clean Day events hosted by the Alabama Department of Agriculture and Industries.

When in Doubt, Hire a Professional

Professional services are a great choice to take the guesswork out of pesticide applications. Professional applicators have the tools and training for proper application if you treat lawns, ornamentals, and residential areas. Remember, safety and accuracy are key to a successful pest management program.

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PESTICIDE SAFETY GUIDE FOR HOMEOWNERS

Pesticides are a valuable integrated pest management tool that can protect plants against disease, weeds, and insect pests. However, when misused, pesticides pose a serious risk to public health and the environment.

Attitude Makes the Difference:
Using pesticides wisely can contribute
to a safer environment.

Your pesticide hazard equals the toxicity times the exposure. That means you increase the risks if you are exposed to a product multiple times or with a high concentration.



Mixing Liquid Pesticides

Pick a well-ventilated area on the lawn or ground to mix pesticides. Do not mix on hard surfaces or concrete.

- Always read the label before you begin to measure to be sure you have the right tools to measure and distribute the pesticide properly.
- Put on the appropriate pesticide safety equipment that is listed on your label before opening the container. Wear eye protection, rubber gloves, a long-sleeved shirt, waterproof shoes, and pants.
- Measure the proper amount of product required. Do not overuse! Fill the sprayer with $\frac{2}{3}$ of the water needed; then add the measured pesticide product. Rinse the measuring container and pour rinse water into the sprayer. Fill the sprayer with the required amount of water and spray on the target plant or site. Wear the proper mask and goggles to reduce inhalation or eye exposure if using dust or powder.



Applying Pesticides

Careful application can prevent pesticides from entering waterways. Remember to read the directions carefully before spraying, and water-in pesticides only if required on the label.

- Apply the spray or granules only to the target plant or site. Do not apply to driveways, sidewalks, or other hard-surface areas.
- If the label specifies that the product be watered in, apply only enough water to move the pesticide into the ground. Stop watering when puddling occurs.
- Avoid pesticide runoff away from the target site. This is one of the most common ways pesticides enter our groundwater and waterways. Do not apply pesticides if rainfall is expected within 6 to 8 hours.

Storing Unused Pesticides

Store pesticides:

- In the original container with all labeling.
- In a cool, well-ventilated location that is not inside the home.
- Under lock and key, safely away from children.
- In a location that can contain an accidental spill.



Disposing of Pesticide Containers

Keep pesticides out of drains and landfills. Follow the directions below to dispose of empty liquid pesticide containers. For dry pesticides, empty packages completely, fold them, and throw them into the trash.

- Empty and use all contents of the container. Fill the container a third of the way. Rinse the container three times with water and pour the rinse water into the sprayer. Do not insert a hose into the container.
- Spray the rinse water on the target plant or site. Do not pour it down the drain!
- Clean the sprayer by flushing the inside with fresh water. Spray flush water on the target plant or site. Repeat.
- Read the label for disposal instructions. Contact your local waste management provider for disposal instructions. Do not recycle or use the container to fulfill any other tasks.

