

SAFE HANDLING OF PESTICIDES

Integrated Pest Management (IPM) is the best approach to pest control. In IPM, the use of pesticides is combined with appropriate biological, cultural and physical pest control measures and your personal tolerance for the pest. As an example, if the majority of aphids can be washed from a plant using a strong spray of water, the use of pesticides probably is unnecessary.

Whether you have a small yard or acres that stretch toward the horizon, your use of pesticides impacts the environment and others in your community.

Answer these questions before deciding a pesticide is required:

- Have you identified the insect or disease causing the problem?
- Is the level of damage great enough to warrant control?
- Is the problem likely to go away without action?
- Have you tried cultural, biological or mechanical controls?
- Is the pest in a vulnerable stage at the time you will apply the pesticide?
- Is the pesticide registered for use on the plant and site in which the plant is found?
- Is the pest or disease listed on label?
- How long will the pesticide remain active in the ground after use?

If you decide to use a pesticide remember, “The label is the law”. Read the entire label before purchasing. Purchase the least toxic product based on the signal words: “Caution” (least toxic), “Warning” or “Danger” (most toxic). Also, if you are paying someone to apply your pesticide, that person must have commercial applicators license.

The pest or disease to be targeted and the location in which the product can be used are listed on the label. Look for warnings, such as, “this product is highly toxic to bees” or “do not apply where runoff is likely”.

It is illegal to use a pesticide on a food crop unless that food is listed on the label. Look for “pre-harvest” information to know how many days must pass between spray and harvest for the food to be safe to eat. Do not assume that washing the food will remove the pesticide residue.

When applying pesticides wear long sleeves, long pants, chemical-resistant shoes/boots and gloves, eye protection, and a hat with a brim and neck protection. Never eat, drink or smoke while using pesticides. Do not walk through areas

where you have already applied the pesticide. Do not spray pesticides on windy days. Temperature gradients that occur in hilly areas can also cause pesticide spray to drift, perhaps onto neighboring properties. Be considerate of your neighbors by letting them know when you are going to spray so they too can be prepared.

Clean the sprayer body, hose and nozzle with clean water immediately after use. Spray rinse water over an area that will not be harmed by the pesticide. Do not pour it down the drain. Never use a sprayer that has contained a weed killer to apply an insecticide or fungicide. This may kill a desirable plant.

Store pesticides only in original containers, and keep the labels legible. Never store pesticides in the house or near food or medical products. Preferably store them in a locked cabinet on a shelf 4 feet off the ground, away from children and pets.

The shelf-life of a pesticide may be listed on the label, but if not assume two years. Older pesticides should be disposed of at Clallam County's Moderate Risk Waste Facility in Port Angeles.

For more information about pesticides read the following publications from Washington State University:

"Pesticides: Learning about Labels" at

<http://cru.cahe.wsu.edu/CEPublications/FSIPM001/FSIPM001.pdf>

"Pesticides: Safe Handling" (MISC 0192)

<http://king.wsu.edu/gardening/MGCD/WSUEB/misc0192.pdf>

"Safe Disposal of Pesticides" (EB1386)

<http://cru.cahe.wsu.edu/CEPublications/eb1386/eb1386.html>

General First-Aid Tips for Pesticide Exposures

- Read the pesticide label carefully before you use it and be prepared to follow the first aid instructions.
- If an exposure occurs, get medical help immediately, if needed. Call Washington Poison Control at 1-800-732-6985 or dial "911."
- Provide the responder with the information on the pesticide label.
- If the pesticide spills on skin, wash area immediately with soap and water and discard contaminated clothing.

- If the pesticide gets into eyes, flush with clear water for 10 to 15 minutes.
 - If the pesticide vapor is inhaled, move victim to fresh air; give artificial respiration if victim is unconscious.
 - If victim has swallowed pesticide the label will indicate whether or not to induce vomiting. Do not give mouth-to-mouth resuscitation.
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