**#7 - Applying Pesticides**

**Proper pesticide application**

**Before You Apply a Pesticide**

Along with your right to apply pesticides comes your responsibility to prevent damage to others. Read the label and add the pesticide (and water if necessary) to your application equipment. Refer to Home PEST brochure #8, "Hand Sprayer Calibration."  

- **Check your Equipment**
  - Never use leaky equipment.
  - Make sure you have the right equipment for the job.
  - Make sure you know how to use and clean the equipment.

- **Gather the necessary tools and equipment**
  - Personal protective clothing & equipment required by the label (e.g., chemical-resistant gloves).
  - Sprayer and/or spreader.
  - Warning signs for outdoor applications (see box about warning signs).

- **Perform a pesticide container and add the pesticide (and water if necessary) to your application equipment. Refer to Home PEST brochure #8, "Hand Sprayer Calibration."**

- **Prepare the area to be treated**
  - Keep adults, children, and pets away from the area during treatment and for any time period after treatment specified on the label.
  - Remove all food, toys, and pet dishes from the area to be treated.

- **Mix the pesticide**
  - You are now ready to open the pesticide container and add the pesticide (and water if necessary) to your application equipment. Refer to Home PEST brochure #8, "Hand Sprayer Calibration.”

- **When you apply a pesticide**
  - Wear the proper personal protective clothing and equipment when you apply pesticides. Check the pesticide label and see Home PEST brochure #10, "Personal Protective Equipment.”
  - Do not smoke, drink, or eat while applying pesticides.
  - Keep a constant pressure in the sprayer and agitate frequently.
  - Condense your spray to the target area.

- **After you apply a pesticide**
  - Never open a sprayer when its contents are under pressure. The owner’s manual will tell you how to release the pressure.
  - Clean the equipment you used. Partly fill the sprayer with water, shake, and spray the residue onto the treatment area. Repeat this process two more times before properly storing the sprayer.
  - Remove your personal protective clothing and handle according to the instructions given in Home PEST brochure #10, "Personal Protective Equipment.”
  - Wash any exposed skin with soap and water.

**Frequently asked questions**

Q: **Why shouldn’t I apply pesticides on windy or hot days?**

When applying pesticides, it is important to prevent the pesticide from drifting to areas not intended to be treated. On windy days, the likelihood of pesticide drift is increased. You can reduce drift by using nozzles with larger openings. Spraying in the early morning or evening when the air is likely to be calm, and keeping the nozzle close to the surface being treated. As the air temperature rises, chemicals in some pesticides vaporize. The vapors may be carried by moving air and settle into areas where you don’t want the pesticide. By making pesticide applications only when the temperature is less than the maximum specified on the label, you will greatly reduce your chance of harming non-target plants and animals.

Q: **Can I use the same pesticide recommended to control ants in my garden to control ants in my kitchen?**

You may only apply a pesticide to those sites (e.g., garden, house, pet) that are listed on the product label. If the label does not state that the pesticide may be used to control ants indoors, it is illegal and unsafe to do so. However, if you have a product that will control ants in your garden and you want to use it to control another garden insect, you may do so, provided that the label does not prohibit such use.

Before doing this, check with your county Cooperative Extension office to be sure it will be effective.

**Home PEST**

Home PEST seeks to provide homeowners with the knowledge they need to make informed decisions about pesticides.

This publication is available from your county Cooperative Extension office.

The Home PEST project was developed by the University of Wisconsin-Extension Pesticide Applicator Training (PAT) program.

Any reference to pesticide products are for your convenience and are not an endorsement or criticism of the product or other similar products.

The University of Wisconsin-Madison and the Cooperative Extension Service of the University of Wisconsin are Equal Opportunity/Affirmative Action employers. This publication is available from your county Cooperative Extension office.